THE UNITED STATES ARMY CHAPLAIN’S ROLE DURING TIMES OF
TRAUMATIC INJURY AND DEATH IN A COMBAT ENVIRONMENT

THESIS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE
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This work is dedicated to the soldiers of the 1-5 Cav who placed themselves at risk in order to improve the lives of others. To our many wounded soldiers and to those who died, giving up their own lives so that others can have better lives, I pray God's comfort and grace upon you. It was a privilege to be your chaplain. I ask God to use this work to help future chaplains better prepare to minister in the midst of combat trauma. God, hasten the day when such preparations are not required.

Chaplain (Capt) Steven G. Rindahl
1-5 Cav Battalion Chaplain
September 2005 -- May 2008

Soldiers Who Lost their Lives in Service to Others
1st Battalion, 5th Calvary Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division
Operation Iraqi Freedom 2006 through 2008

Staff Sergeant Kris Cirasso 05 April 1980 -- 07 December 2006
Specialist Robert Volker 07 August 1985 -- 20 December 2006
Sergeant Matthew Aupon 13 September 1979 -- 03 May 2007
Staff Sergeant Chris Hamlin 25 March 1983 -- 04 May 2007
Private First Class Larry Guyton 26 February 1984 -- 05 May 2007
Staff Sergeant Kris Kiernan 20 February 1970 -- 06 May 2007
Sergeant Jean-Paul Medlin 26 July 1979 -- 19 May 2007
Specialist David Behrle 06 May 1987 -- 19 May 2007
Staff Sergeant Chris Moore 14 June 1978 -- 19 May 2007
Specialist Travis Haslip 21 March 1987 -- 19 May 2007
Caesar II (alias for his and his family’s safety) ?? ??? ???? -- 19 May 2007*
Specialist Mark Caguioa 01 June 1985 -- 24 May 2007
Specialist Chadrick Domino 21 June 1983 -- 31 May 2007**
Corporal Romel Catalan 12 April 1986 -- 02 June 2007**
Specialist Donald Young 20 February 1988 -- 08 August 2007
Specialist James McDonald 14 July 1981 -- 12 November 2007

On fame’s eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
While glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of our dead.

*Local National Interpreter working to bring stability to his country.

**A 1-23 Task Force 1-5 Cav
Statement of Disclaimer

The views expressed in this dissertation are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

Signed

Date: 11 January 2012
An Abstract of

The United States Army Chaplain’s Role During Times of

Traumatic Injury and Death in a Combat Environment

By Steven Glenn Rindahl

It is critical that anyone responding to a traumatic event be able to fulfill his or her purpose in the situation. The US Army Chaplain must be prepared to provide valued ministry during times of traumatic injury and death in a combat environment.

The purpose of the investigation was to establish core ministry actions based upon identified common expectations and standards between chaplains, officers, and Soldiers of their command relating to ministry during times of traumatic injury and death in a combat environment. This intent was met through a series of steps beginning with the identification of the problem that US Army Chaplains have not been adequately prepared for the task of Combat Trauma Ministry. A review of current scholarship in the field demonstrated that significant works on Combat Trauma Ministry are almost non-existent.

In order to accomplish the investigation two research methodologies were employed. There was use of quantitative data and large scale use of qualitative research. The qualitative research proved to be particularly useful because of its focus on the study of problems in the social context. Research of the issue began with an examination of chaplain qualifications. This included a review of the educational and ministerial prerequisites applicants must meet. A study of the training provided by the Army to those newly entering the US Army Chaplain Corps follows. This process revealed the challenges posed in trying to teach clergy from civilian parishes to minister in the Army context of which many have no experience. The heart of the research is the body of interviews of chaplains, officers, and Soldiers. These personal accounts of ministry done, and failing to be done, with the theological impetus behind it provided the groundwork from which to draw the research conclusions.

The research concludes that preparation for Combat Trauma Ministry within the Army is still lacking but improving. In order to overcome remaining deficiencies individual chaplains, supervisory chaplains, and the US Army Chaplain Corps need to personally and professionally augment training to ensure that the Chaplain Corps’ Core Competencies Continuum – Nurture the Living, Care for the Wounded, and Honor the Dead – are adequately performed. The research identified three priorities of ministry to accomplish this intent. They are: Maintain Composure, Give them Something Tangible, and Share in the Burden. Finally, there is the recognition that the US Army Chaplain Corps must become more stringent in three specific concerns: Training and Qualification standards, developing self and supervisory care for chaplains, and preparing for the long-lasting effects of combat exposure and PTSD with a Soul Care emphasis.
I entered the Doctor of Ministry program at Spurgeon’s College with credit granted for the Master of Theology in Preaching I completed at Spurgeon’s College and validated by the University of Wales. I finished the majority of that course while I served in a civilian parish. I completed the MTh after entering the US Army Chaplain Corps, which shifted my focus to practical theology applications in the Army context. My MTh dissertation was on preaching to US Army Soldiers. That research revealed significant information concerning the overall role of the chaplain. I entered the DMin program immediately upon completion of the MTh, which immediately preceded my deployment to Iraq.

While deployed, I completed a series of assignments to meet the requisite course work needed for the DMin program. This work included an essay on my theology of mission, an essay on Andrew Walls’ essay “The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture” from an extract provided in Spurgeon’s College’s Ministry in Contemporary Society Module Handbook, 2006, and a journal article essay entitled, “Ministry at the Time of Traumatic Injury and Death.”

Each of these assignments developed a theme of ministry to Soldiers that culminated in my thesis research. The theology of mission essay compared the great commission to an Operations Order (OPORD) and identified Soldiers as a people group. The key finding was that while Soldiers may not be an ethnicity, those in the profession of arms could easily be classed as their own people group with a witnessed greater commonality between Soldiers from disparate nationalities than between our Soldiers and their American civilian counterparts.

The essay on the Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator outlined cultural affects on the Gospel message working from a worldwide focus to the US context and resulting in an examination of the unique cultural influence of the US Army on the Gospel and conversely the Gospel on the US Army and its Soldiers. The key finding was that the Gospel is made prisoner in the Army but by allowing itself to be made a prisoner, access is gained. Through this access, the Gospel can be spread.

I developed the final essay from a chaplain training presentation I did while deployed. Identifying the lack of adequate training in the realm of Combat Trauma Ministry, I developed and presented a daylong teaching session for the chaplains deployed to Iraq at the time. This final essay brought to my own attention the need for research in the field and motivated my desire to make Combat Trauma Ministry the focus of my doctoral thesis.
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

*To die with glory, if one has to die at all, is still, I think, pain for the one who dies.*

1.1 Identifying Combat Ministry Concern

Blood is everywhere; Soldiers are hurt and dying. Army doctors, physician assistants, medics, and combat lifesavers are working frantically in a controlled chaos trying to save the lives of Soldiers that have been wounded in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack. The chaplain stands in the midst of all that is going on and needs to do his or her mission. Questions erupt from this event and many others like it, which occur in the modern combat battlefield. What is the chaplain’s role in this setting? What should he do? Did anyone train him to do what people need of him? Why should he do it? And, who sets this standard?

I have been serving in the Regular Army as a United States Army Chaplain since the summer of 2005. Prior to that, beginning in the summer of 2002, I was in the training program for chaplains, as a member of the Army Reserve. During this time, I have met, worked with, trained with, and served in combat with a variety of chaplains from a wide range of church backgrounds and non-Christian faith groups. This range of expression of the Christian church and other belief systems brings

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2. Soldier(s) is always capitalized according to US Army standard.

3. The United States Army Reserve is effectively equivalent to the Territorial Army in the United Kingdom.

4. According to the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, there are over 190 denominations and faith based organizations providing endorsements to ministers wishing to become chaplains.
with it a broad spectrum of standards in theological training, doctrinal beliefs, expectations of what to do during times of trauma/death, minimum experience level prior to entering the chaplaincy, and anticipated levels of interaction with those from different denominational and faith backgrounds.

These differences among the clergy within the chaplaincy are frequently of great benefit. We have close to an all-encompassing representation of the various expressions of Christianity among our chaplains. Furthermore, there is strong representation for many members of minority faith groups. Over time, chaplains learn how to work well with those from various backgrounds with which they would never have otherwise interacted. Effective chaplains learn how to bridge gaps and enter collegial relationships with those in other denominations even if their respective churches reject such interaction. These are but a few of the many positives of the Army chaplaincy facilitated by the United States military chaplaincy endorsement process.

The primary negative of the system, using its current methodology, is the breadth of standards expected by different denominations, which has effectively become a lack of minimum competencies. One only has to be moderately aware of the differences between denominational practices to understand that great variances in the practice of ministry exist between Christian faith groups. There are different demands and expectations of ministry as well as restrictions in ministry within the many Christian denominations supplying chaplains to the Army. For the remainder of this thesis, I will use “denomination” generically for all endorsing bodies.
of seminaries accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. Furthermore, the differences are not simply within Christian standards and practices. Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Unitarian ministers also receive endorsements and provide chaplains to the Army. These facts and multiple other factors affect the establishing of training standards for US Army chaplains. These other factors include: the US Army Chaplain Corps’ denominational plurality, the religious plurality of the Army as a whole, the constitutional right to free-exercise of religion (for the chaplain as well as the Soldiers he or she serves), and the counter-balancing constitutional restriction preventing government establishment of religion. The question becomes – How does the Army ensure its chaplains are prepared to fulfill his or her role during times of traumatic injury and death in a combat environment?

My concern is that the Army relies on denominations to ensure the meeting of Department of Defense prerequisites and to set denominational qualifications of those ministers whom they endorse to the chaplaincy. While the Department of Defense does issue minimum standards, their purpose is to ensure the meeting of formal academic requirements more so than checking demonstrable ministerial competencies. This fact leads to great variance in the level of pastoral competence represented among Army chaplains. It also recognizes that even the mandated academic requirements cannot ensure training to a minimum level of competence. Simultaneously, the Army program of instruction for entry-level chaplains is three months in length and devotes a single three-hour lecture on the topic, “Religious Support to the Wounded”. The current expectation of endorsers does not include

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6 ATS is the primary accrediting body for theological colleges and seminaries in the United States and Canada.

7 Constitution of the United States, Bill of Rights, 1st Amendment, 1791.
ensuring any training in this topic. Additionally, the current block of instruction within the chaplain school is not adequate to teach the task fully. Ministry to the wounded and dying needs more attention in the chaplain-training program. The conducting of this training cannot create the appearance of Establishment. Rather, it must maintain the delicate balance between Free Exercise and Establishment mandated by the Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution.

The result of the current system is a chaplain corps that is without a significantly established base minimum performance standard for trauma ministry. In turn, how a chaplain will perform when faced with a traumatic event is unpredictable.

1.2 My Qualifications and Experience

1.2.1 My Education

The formal civilian education I received in order to qualify for entry into chaplain service consisted of obtaining the degree Master of Divinity (MDiv). This was the minimum educational standard for chaplains serving in the US Armed Forces entering at that time. The MDiv is typically a ninety semester-hour program taking three years of full-time study to complete. The structure of the MDiv is consistent across accredited seminaries in the United States. Each program has a biblical studies component, church history component, systematic theology, and pastoral ministry. Each seminary follows this basic outline in structure, but the content can vary significantly based on theological convictions, denominational standards, and supporting church practices.

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8 A semester hour is a unit of academic credit; one hour of lecture per week for an academic semester. A semester typically is fourteen weeks in duration.
I completed the MDiv at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) in Fort Worth, Texas in 2005. What follows are my personal experiences during my class work at SWBTS. At that time the MDiv program at SWBTS did not include any mandatory training in counseling or a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) component. CPE frequently occurs in a hospital and allows opportunity for students to experience trauma or emergency services.

The pastoral ministry portion consisted of two sections. The first was two classes on preaching and one class on church administration. The final pastoral ministry class was concerned with ensuring compliance with the Southern Baptist credo-baptist position of complete immersion baptism of those old enough to make personal professions of faith and a memorial only view of Communion strictly referred to as The Lord’s Supper. In the final class, there was passing reference to the conducting of funerals. Mostly this was to refer to the location of the service in the Pastor’s Manual. Subjects such as, what to do at the time of death, interaction with the bereaved, and helping people through the loss were not covered. The fleeting references to death in seminary always related to “natural” deaths, old age primarily.

Theologically, what little was taught about the dead was in relation to their spiritual state at time of death. While they did not teach what a minister should do for the family and other bereaved, they did teach what you cannot do for the dead. SWBTS was clear in its adherence to the principle that a person is either Christian or

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9 A class consists of three hours of lecture per week for a period of twelve to fourteen weeks and additional reading and writing assignments. These three contacts hours per week over the course of the twelve to fourteen week-long semester with the out of classroom assignments completed earns the student three semester hours.
not at their time of death. Once dead you can do nothing else for the person, his or her fate is sealed. The Lukan account of Jesus telling the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man with the great chasm between them in death was one of many biblical proofs offered to defend this position.\textsuperscript{10} While not an uncommon understanding of the passage, the parable teaches much more than this simple message.\textsuperscript{11} The trouble is, at SWBTS the emphasis on the importance of “making a decision for Christ prior to death” caused the ignoring of many rich lessons that this parable contains. As can be imagined, this was not taught as part of the pastoral ministry class. Rather, it was a motivational factor in the class on evangelism. My seminary education was devoid of a theology of suffering and death except that of Jesus so that Christians can have a victorious life in Him. This left a tremendous void in my education as how a Christian is to respond to death, loss, and the resulting grief.

As I completed the MDiv, I enrolled in the Master of Theology (MTh) at Spurgeon’s College with a specialization in Preaching. This was a rewarding educational experience but obviously did not cover the theological and pastoral concerns of grief and loss. What it did do for me, however, is prompt me to spend more time in the study of the overall worship experience.

Between my desire for something other than what I had experienced in local church life until then and the motivation to explore worship more fully, I began a self-directed reading and church visitation program. I quickly gained an appreciation for and felt drawn to a more sacramental expression of Christianity than I had been formally educated for or had previously experienced.

\textsuperscript{10} Luke 16:19-31

1.2.2 My Civilian Parish Experience

The US Army requires a potential chaplain to complete two years of post MDiv pastoral ministry prior to entering the chaplaincy. There are circumstances, which allow the granting waivers for the lack of this experience. I served as the pastor of a small country parish for three years while obtaining the MDiv. I received a waiver allowing concurrent experience rather than post seminary experience. The Army can and will authorize other waivers as well. Therefore, a person can never assume the level of competency, experience, or educational credentials of any chaplain. My parish ministry was educational and rewarding. However, my congregation was primarily healthy and injury free. My experience with death was limited to two events and each involved older individuals. Traumatic events did not occur in my parish and the experience there in no way prepared me for the ministry needed in times of trauma.

1.2.3 An Example from My Combat Experience

I was deployed with the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment (1-5 Cav), “Black Knights” of the 1st Cavalry Division from Oct 2006 until January 2008. This period covered the “Surge” of US Forces in Iraq. My battalion had an Area of Responsibility (AOR) that covered the western Baghdad communities of Mansour, Adl, Al Jamiya, and most notably Ameriya. The 1-5 Cav suffered seventeen Soldiers killed as well as one of its contracted interpreters (see dedication page for details). In addition to those killed, there were countless others wounded. Some were evacuated from combat theater of operations because of wounds, while others were treated in country and returned to duty. This experience convinced me of my
initial chaplain training’s inadequacy and motivates me to work toward an improvement in the training.

On Thursday the 7th of December, 2006, an Iraqi insurgent triggered an IED causing my battalion’s first KIA as he, with other members of his company, patrolled our assigned section of Baghdad. A Soldier from the battalion headquarters notified me of the casualty and I prepared to go to the Combat Support Hospital (CSH) on the International Zone (IZ).\textsuperscript{12} As a Combined Arms Battalion the 1-5 Cav had over 900 Soldiers. The Soldier KIA was one of many of whom I had seen in and around the battalion area, but did not actually know. I felt guilty about this fact but it turned out to be a bitter blessing. By not having the emotion of personal friendship adding to what was already an emotionally charged event, I was able to prepare myself to minister to the needs of others. I needed that ability to be slightly detached in order to think. I grabbed and put on my body armor, took up my position in the patrol, and rode to the IZ. My mind raced, “What am I going to do?”

Seminary had not addressed death, let alone traumatic death. The pastorate had no parallel experience, and in my Chaplain Officer Basic Course (CHOBC) training, the answer to what do you do when a person dies was to begin preparations for a Memorial Ceremony followed by work with behavioral health personnel in conducting of a critical incident stress debriefing. There had been nothing taught regarding what should be done with the grieving Soldiers and with the members of command while there with the body at, or shortly after, the time of death. My growing acceptance of a sacramental theology told me that, although God’s will can

\textsuperscript{12} Also known as the “Green Zone” which is not, as is commonly thought, a reference to its safety but rather to the significant amount of vegetation found there.
be accomplished independently of me or anyone else, I had to do something. I was, and remain to this day, convinced that if, as the chaplain, and therefore God’s representative in that time and place, I demonstrated care and concern, then people would know that God cares and is concerned. Simultaneously, I believed that if I did nothing it would seem as if God did nothing. I was afraid of three things as we travelled to the IZ. First, I was afraid of what I would see and experience. Then I was afraid I would do something wrong. Finally, I was afraid I would do nothing at all. It is the last fear that scared me the most. “It is someone’s task to meet and kill this dragon, but St. George is not always on the job. My unfaithfulness [could have brought] disaster.”

I did not know if I would experience “courage-generating fear” or slip to “paralyzing terror”.

As our heavily armored vehicles lumbered down the road, I considered Jesus’ instruction to treat others as you wish to be treated. I thought of the passage in James and decided that I would want somebody to pray for me, my friends, and my family, that I would want to be anointed, that I would want there to be a distinct act of faith that marked my passing from this side of life to the next. I prepared myself to do that, regardless of what we saw upon arrival.

When we arrived, the hospital staff informed the Commander, Command Sergeant Major and me, that our Soldier was in the morgue. A “graves registration specialist” brought the command team and members of the patrol down the corridor, out of the hospital, and into the building that functioned as the morgue. The young


14 Cabot and Dicks, 110.

15 Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31

16 James 5:13-16
specialist gave me a short briefing prior to all of us entering. He explained to me that they had prepared the body for viewing the best they could. The fact that there was a dressing on his head was to cover his wounds there; the body bag was unzipped as far as it could be without showing the wounds to his body. What was exposed could be touched, but not to let anyone move the dressing or open the bag further. He said and did this to spare us the sight of the wounds that killed our comrade, and I took responsibility to see his instructions followed.

Upon entering the room, we saw our Soldier and gathered around the table upon which he laid. At first, there was simple silence. Then after a few moments, which seemed much longer than they really were, my commander, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Kuehl, simply said the word “chaplain”. It was time for me to do something – all eyes were on me. I did not know his faith (if any), but began to pray.

A prayer for the dead seemed simultaneously right and wrong to me. My distinctly evangelical upbringing and initial theological education insisted that a prayer said for the dead was at best without value and at worst a plea against the already determined will of God. In the two textbooks assigned to me for my “Pastoral Care” class, there was no mention of prayer in relation to the deceased. In the first, there was no mention of prayer in relation to death at all. In the second text, the only mention of prayer was in a sample funeral service and was a prayer for the family in its time of grief. In my assigned “minister’s manual,” and the other

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17 At the time of this writing, Dale Kuehl is a Colonel and actively serving in the US Army.


two that were recommended for our use, prayers dealing with death were strictly limited to those offered for the comfort of the family in their time of grief. While my seminary professor and the writers of these various books certainly believed in a life post physical death and of the future resurrection, it was not obvious in guidance given regarding caring for the living during the time of loss. There was no promise, or even mention of, the resurrection in the sample funeral, and it never mentioned the status of the deceased. My official education left me with no guidance for the situation. The culture of the church within which I was raised was, as I mentioned, decidedly negative to the idea. The most useful recognition in one of the volumes is the observation that, “[o]ne of the major ironies of life is that people who want nothing to do with the church…request a minister to conduct the funeral service of a family member who dies.” This recognition brings with it the reality that, as the minister present during the time of death, the chaplain needs to be ready to do something which brings a sense of sacred to the space.

My personal study, sparked in seminary and fostered by my additional educational experiences, made me uncomfortable with such a limited view. I wanted to do more than my education or experience had prepared me. While previously theologically foreign to me, I now understood death not to mean a relational end, but simply a transition. Accepting the belief that we, as Christians, are all members of one body and therefore with one another, “Within the Body each member suffers and rejoices with the others, and in each member the Holy


21 Roberts, 59.

22 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; Ephesians 3:6; Colossians 3:15
Spirit intercedes for the whole. [And that] [t]hese relationships are changed but not broken by death.”

This reflects Jesus’ statement, “have you not read what was said to you by God: ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.”

“This implies that they are still alive since it would mean little to say that God “is” (εἰμί, present tense) the God of dead men.”

“If God is the God of the patriarchs, they are by implication alive after their death (whether in Sheol [thus Ellis] or otherwise is of no consequence to the argument), and thus the ground is prepared for the reality of the future resurrection.” Therefore, I was not facing the offering of a prayer for the dead, which my upbringing would rail against, but rather a prayer for the living. The prayer is then “an expression of mutual love and solidarity in Christ”. The trouble created in the situation is whether the person was indeed alive in Christ.

It seems to me that there is a quite pragmatic answer to this concern. If the physically deceased is truly a brother or sister in Christ, God can accept the prayers offered on his or her behalf as intended. If the person died outside of the faith then God can simply negate any prayers offered. Therefore, when I elect to offer prayers for the physically deceased I do so with an eye to the continued life in Christ and resurrection of the faithful. Simultaneously, I maintain recognition of God’s sovereignty over the status of all whether redeemed or not. Although my reasoning


24 Matthew 22:32


26 Hagner, 642.

and theological considerations of the action were not well formed at the time, it seemed appropriate; therefore, I prayed for him.

Next, I engaged in an action more readily accepted regardless of theological convictions, prayer for those affected by the death. I prayed for those gathered there. The friends, the fellow Soldiers from the IED struck patrol, the Command Sergeant Major and the Commander. There was an obvious need for God’s comfort and counsel. The stages of grief, shock with disbelief followed by anger run together quickly during times of combat. What takes longer is making it through the stages of bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance.28 Prayer is expected and can immediately help move those present toward acceptance. Part of that movement toward acceptance is to include prayers for the family members and loved ones back home. This reminds those present there is a bigger picture. It takes the death out of the room and places it in the context of all those who cared for the deceased and into the larger perspective of being in God’s hands.

Finally, I anointed him with oil making the sign of the cross on his forehead. Some, from the various denominations that practice anointing, may raise the concern that after the person is deceased there is no purpose in the anointing. This criticism would fit well with James, which instructs the one who is sick to call for the prayer and anointing and this could not happen with him being physically dead.29 I agree with the assessment of the action in light of the scripture. However, I had determined that I would do what I would want to have done for me; that included being anointed.


29 James 5:14
When I was finished, the Command Sergeant Major called the group to attention and we rendered a salute. Then, one by one, we filed out of the morgue and towards our vehicles for the convoy back to Camp Liberty. It was a somber movement. The combat Soldiers were certainly reflecting on the reality that they would be back on patrol soon. I asked myself a series of questions. Was it right? Was it enough? Was there anything I should have done differently? With these questions, there arose anger toward my seminary professors and chaplain school cadre – why had they never taught me what to do in this crucial moment?

1.3 Examples from Other Chaplains’ Combat Experiences

The following vignettes provide examples of how, regardless of denomination, different chaplains perform or fail to perform ministry in the face of traumatic injury and death. The intent of relating them is two-fold. The first is to show that there is not one denomination more ready than the next to step into a trauma and minster better than the next. The second is to demonstrate that expectations based on assumed actions based on the denominational identity of the chaplain are in no way reliable.

The expectation of many wounded and Soldiers killed in action caused a team of three chaplains to converge on the aid station and wait for the arrival of the wounded. In the dividing of responsibility, one chaplain was assigned the operating room, one was assigned the task of being outside with the Soldiers anxious for news of their comrades’ status and condition, and one was assigned the task of ministering to any expectant and dead. While awaiting arrival of the wounded, one chaplain

30 Expectants are those expected to die so quickly and regardless of medical care that they are separated from the rest and left to die with no further medical attention other than pain relief.
asked the third had he ever dealt with the dead previously. The third chaplain replied that he had and the one asking then admitted that he had not. He said he intentionally avoided the critically wounded because he did not know what to do and he did not go to see the dead because, “the man is dead – what can I do for him?” This chaplain was United Methodist by denomination and had the requisite number of years in parish ministry prior to entering the Army as a chaplain. However, his theological education, his training as a chaplain, his experience (in the parish and in the Army), and the lack of any intentional mentorship all left him devoid of any knowledge as to what to do or any theological impetus to do anything for those who had suffered traumatic injury or succumbed to their wounds. Many chaplains have “a need to be needed” that motivates them to do many actions that are easily seen by others but do not reflect actual needed ministry. What this chaplain did is leave the majority of his battalion behind to go out on patrol frequently. There can be some value in this but it needs to be balanced with the wider scope of a chaplain’s mission. Chaplain Bergsma makes this observation:

Another advantage of unit chaplains working out of the med-evac area was that they frequently were able to minister to their troops who were wounded and dead. The wounded often stated that seeing the familiar face of their chaplain had been a welcome sight when they were brought in. Unit chaplains had found from experience that they usually had been more help to the troops in this way rather than “humping it” with a rifle company and having no contact with anyone except the man before him and the man after him on the trek.

Slogging and sharing in combat will always be a serious and necessary undertaking of chaplains with Marines, and circumstances are always changeable, and methods debatable. However, as a general summation Chaplain Hubble listed a valuable insight. He concluded:

31 CH (LTC) Stephen Walsh, 1CD Division Chaplain, 05 May 2008.

32 His own description of the ministry he performed.
Many chaplains feel that they have to be with their troops on patrol no matter what. If they have not identified themselves with their troops back in the base C.P. [Command Post], it is too late to do it on the line or on the patrol. This is not World War II or Korea. The chaplain on the line or on a patrol is mostly a burden rather than an asset. The men are sacrificed from the ministry of the chaplain when the chaplain finds himself with a squad or a patrol or even a company under the guise of being with his troops. Chaplains who have been in Vietnam from the beginning and thought their place to be in the line of fire with their troops have concluded (after learning the hard way): stay where you can minister to all your troops.  

The chaplain from the example given often had Soldiers from his battalion seeking the counsel of a chaplain from other battalions because he was not available. Further, by his own admission, he did not provide ministry during some of his Soldiers’ most desperate times.

The next example concerns a chaplain who is a member of a denomination claiming apostolic succession from Peter and through the ages but is not Roman Catholic. This is common within the US Army Chaplain Corps, as there are many endorsers among the nearly 200 that claim to be “Catholic” or “Episcopal”. The chaplain mentioned made significant effort at establishing his catholicity. He is extreme in his liturgical form and to say it is “high church” would be a grave understatement. His denomination has specific sacramental expectations regarding the dead and dying. In light of all this, a person would expect the chaplain to readily minister to the wounded and dying. He did not. When asked why he did not his reply was that, “It creeps me out”. He could and did explain what his church expected of him and why. At the same time, he would not do it. This was not from


34 Commented on by multiple chaplains with whom he shared space.
theological concerns, in fact he was violating his claimed theological beliefs. It was from his personal unease. A lack of significant training and experience left him feeling incapable of doing what he was convinced is the right thing to do.

In another example, Chaplain Bowers recalls one Soldier’s death during his time in Vietnam, his “buddies came up to me and said, ‘Father [knowing I wasn’t a priest], please give him last rites.’ Of course I prayed for him and commended him into the hands of God, hoping all was well with him before he went on to eternity. No matter what we could do, we couldn’t do anything to save his life.” In this case, the chaplain faced with a request from outside of his theological practice or denominational expectations provided real and meaningful ministry during a time of traumatic injury and death. Bowers did not elaborate in his memoir what prepared him to provide this ministry. What is important to note is that he did not reject the stated need of the Soldiers in his care. Frequently chaplains, particularly those who are from the many evangelical denominations, state they cannot answer a Soldier request for “last rites” because they “are not Catholic”. These same chaplains often rebuff attempts to develop the question into a “what can you do for this Soldier in need” never being able to get past the terminology “last rites”.

1.4 Implications for the Chaplain Corps and Individual Chaplains

From the examples given, it is clear that reliable prediction of a chaplain’s response to traumatic injury and death is impossible. This is a problem for the US Army Chaplain Corps because it has dedicated itself to religious support “based on


36 Personal experience while training over 1000 new chaplains “Religious Support to the Wounded and Dying.”
three major principles: Nurture the Living, Care for the Wounded, and Honor the Dead” to the point it has become a specific entry in US Army Regulations.  

Prior to its addition to regulatory guidance, the establishment of these three “comprehensive religious support functions” as expectations of chaplains occurred in US Army Field Manuals. Furthermore, they are clearly identified in the Training Circular given to chaplains at the Joint Readiness Training Center (One of the US Army’s major training locations for Soldiers preparing for deployment). While not expressed in the exact same terms, these core elements of religious support are easily identified throughout the much earlier, *The Chaplain’s Ministry to Hospital Patients*.  

For a long time, the Army, specifically the Chaplain Corps, in its doctrinal publications has emphasized that a US Army chaplain must nurture the living, care for the wounded, and honor the dead. At the same time, there has been no specific experience requirement demanded of endorsers supplying chaplains to the Army. Training within the chaplain’s course has been largely centered on the performance of a memorial ceremony days after the event. Precious little ink or training has been devoted to what to do when the trauma and death is actually happening. This leaves the chaplain’s ability to meet at least two of the Army’s clearly stated expectations questionable, even though codified in regulation. Further, when a chaplain fails to

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meet a Soldier’s need during their time of crisis he loses personal capital among those Soldiers that see the lack of ministry. This, in turn, limits the chaplain’s ability to fulfill the remaining core religious support functions. Caring for the dead and caring for the living are inseparable. Rather than seeing nurture the living, care for the wounded, and honor the dead as three distinct functions, they are better seen as a single continuum of care, which hereafter, will be referred to as the Core Competencies Continuum. For each of these reasons the Army has a vested interest in ensuring a chaplain is better prepared to fulfill his or her role during times of traumatic injury and death.

There is no less at stake for the individual chaplain. Not knowing, or not feeling confident in what to do during a time of crisis can have discouraging and even devastating effects on the chaplain. More than one chaplain interviewed expressed times of doubt and even a full-blown crisis of faith. One of the most notable examples of a chaplain who was overwhelmed by his wartime experience is that of Chaplain Roger Benimoff who later wrote a book detailing his experiences and the resultant PTSD.\textsuperscript{41} For the chaplain not prepared for the realities of trauma ministry, the very expectation can be unsettling. Chaplain \textit{John Brown} related this as he anticipated going to his first trauma. “I actually was dreading it. I expected the worst and thought I would probably freak out or puke my brains out at the first sight of a traumatic injury.”\textsuperscript{42} Chaplain \textit{Scott Anderson} felt confident going into a trauma situation but then lost his theological confidence as a result of the continual flow of casualties. Now suffering from and receiving treatment for PTSD, Ch \textit{Anderson}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} Chaplain \textit{John Brown}, interview 06 January 2011. All participating chaplains were assured anonymity as part of the standards of ethical research. Assigned pseudonyms are indicated by italics. If the chaplain stated he was willing to be on record or the attributed quotes are in print/part of public record his true name will be used in standard type.
\end{itemize}
said, “I prayed and prayed but they kept dying – it just would not stop.” Both of these chaplains are from denominational backgrounds that lack a theology of suffering. Rather, there is much more emphasis on living a victorious Christian life in their theological educations and denominational expectations.

Prior to entry into combat, each was “comfortable” with death within the parameters of his faith. People expect death to occur at the end of a relatively long life with the occasional exception of an early death allowed as an unknown but real part of God’s providence. One was concerned from the beginning as to what his reaction would be. Both ended up severely changed through the theodicean experience of “gratuitous evil”. A suffering that seemed “beyond that which is necessary for any redemptive or soul-making purpose God may have.” The result was that Ch Brown “towards the end of [his] deployment … felt absolutely nothing when looking at the remains of someone or at their traumatic injury” and Ch Anderson now openly rejects many of the doctrinal positions he once preached with fervor. To be so detached from feeling or disconnected from one’s theological moorings is not healthy for the chaplain and is not good for the Chaplain Corps.

It is important to have realistic expectations of war and the suffering it brings. One chaplain in his initial training remarked to me during the lecture on “Religious Support to the Wounded and Dying,” that he was not worried about it. He stated, “I will pray and my Soldiers will not die.” It was outside of the realm of his theological understanding that God would allow death to occur to those for


whom he prayed. Assuming he did go on to deploy with combat Soldiers, it is likely his beliefs and war’s reality clashed. What that clash did to his faith can only be assessed by evaluating the effect the same clash has had on those like-minded chaplains who went before him. Chaplain Mike Collins is one example. He, in severe self-criticism, claimed that he had “failed” and that his “faith was not sufficient” because a person already dead did not live again when Ch Collins prayed for him.46 While these two chaplains are not representative of the entire Chaplain Corps, their position is common enough that it raises concern. Even among those with much more reserved expectations of the power of prayer, a theological framework which lacks a significant suffering component, such as the two earlier examples, leaves the chaplain vulnerable to emotional trauma of their own. This is unacceptable; it is destructive to the chaplains and impedes the ministry they are called to perform for Soldiers. These are significant reasons why it is crucial that chaplains are exposed to and understand the realities of trauma in a structured training environment. Chaplains must then learn how to incorporate those experiences into their theological framework so they can function and provide quality ministry to their appointed flocks.

1.5 Implications for Officers and Soldiers

By United States law, a chaplain’s role is quite limited in scope. “Each Chaplain shall, when practicable, hold appropriate religious services at least once on each Sunday for the command to which he is assigned, and shall perform appropriate religious burial services for members of the Army who die while in that command.” Further, the law states, “Each commanding officer shall furnish

46 Conversation with author, 2008.
facilities, including necessary transportation, to any chaplain assigned to his
command, to assist the chaplain in performing his duties. As indicated earlier,
regulatory and field manual guidance greatly expands this limited scope. LTC Cole
Kingseed declares the chaplain is “an indispensible member of the chain of
command” who “enable[s] soldiers to strengthen their faith and achieve inner peace,
stability, and a sense of tranquility.” Kingseed goes on to state that the “chaplain
provides a degree of security for the soldiers, who take solace knowing one of
‘God’s own’ is with them” and expressed his expectation that in combat the
chaplain “would be ministering to the sick and wounded”. When it comes to the
need for a chaplain in combat, Kingseed concludes, “[c]ombat veterans know full
well the positive influence a chaplain has… and few at any level would go into
combat again without one”.  

Kingseed speaks from what is frequently referred to as a “force (or
combat) multiplier” perspective. This position promotes the idea that the chaplain is
valuable to the fight because he helps keep the fighting Soldier in the fight. This
concept is largely non-quantifiable but frequently affirmed. It is impossible to say
how many Soldiers continue fighting on because of a few moments with a chaplain
or as result of some ministration performed, but leaders attest to the truth of the
premise. In a message written on the two-year anniversary of one battalion’s
heaviest losses in combat, a senior officer from the battalion wrote to his battalion
chaplain, “[y]our composure two years ago was a rock that we all leaned on during

47 United States Code, Title 10, Section 3547.
49 Kingseed, 15.
50 Kingseed, 16.
that whole month.” Being considered a force multiplier is troubling to some chaplains while others embrace the role depending on the individual chaplain’s theology of combat. Regardless of the chaplain’s personal response to the combat multiplier concept, it is the reality of command expectation.

The chaplain also serves as a personal staff officer to the commander. Command can be a lonely place, and many of the commanders and senior officers interviewed commented on their appreciation of the chaplain as a safe “sounding board,” a person to whom they could express concerns, and a person with whom they could pray.

Those responsible for leading Soldiers in combat need to know that every member of their command is competent and capable of performing his or her assigned duties. Failure on the battlefield can be catastrophic. The Army ensures that every Soldier is indeed competent and capable through a variety of training environments. The chaplain must also be competent and capable in this most crucial of responsibilities. It is more than a need for self-preservation; it is a responsibility to his or her command.

Although from a different perspective, Soldiers almost universally share the concerns of the officers in command. There is a desire for someone to help make sense of seemingly senseless loss, a safe place to express emotions, and someone to help anchor the faith that may seem to be slipping or vanishing in the face of trauma. While not every Soldier seeks a chaplain’s assistance, it is vital for those that do. Soldiers, both those that seek a chaplain’s ministry and those that do not...

51 LTC Stephen Allen, letter to chaplain, May 2009; the month of May 2007 was one of extremely high casualties for the forces in Iraq. This letter is one of two the chaplain received from members of the command team on two-year anniversary of the day of heaviest casualties. Both used the metaphor of the chaplain’s composure being a rock to lean on.
not, are the chaplain’s flock, entrusted by God and the American people to his or her care. If the chaplain fails to perform because of lack of education, training, experience, or any other reason, he fails in his or her calling and violates a sacred trust.

1.6 The Question

Without standardized theological education or background experience, minimal training on the subject, and, until the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, limited institutional knowledge on trauma ministry within the US Army Chaplain Corps, the ministry chaplains perform during times of traumatic injury and death has been unpredictable. Some chaplains’ performance has been good and highly praised. Other chaplains’ attempts (or lack thereof) have been poor, or even bad, resulting in scathing reviews by those to whom they intended to minister.

The United States Constitution prohibits the establishment of religion and those in government work to avoid even the appearance of preference of one faith over another in defense against accusations of “establishment”. With this limitation, it can seem nearly impossible to train the subject in a “this is what you do” type methodology. While mindful of these concerns the question is: What can the US Army Chaplain Corps train in order to ensure a chaplain understands and is ready to adequately perform “The United States Army Chaplain’s Role During Times of Traumatic Injury and Death in a Combat Environment”?

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52 Constitution of the United States, Bill of Rights, 1st Amendment, 1791.
1.7 Purpose and Scope of Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to establish core ministry actions based upon identified common expectations and standards between chaplains, officers, and Soldiers of their command relating to ministry during times of traumatic injury and death in a combat environment. There are many injuries in combat environments, which are not related to combat action. This thesis is operating with a functional definition of “traumatic injury and death in a combat environment” as those injuries/causes of death directly related to combat action. This includes gunfire, mortar and rocket fire, Improvised Explosive Devices, and blunt trauma caused by blast concussion. A combat environment is defined as a theater of operations featuring ongoing hostile action between two or more formal armies or between one or more formal armies and a continuously hostile irregular force. The scope of the “chaplain’s role during times of…” refers to the immediate actions at time of trauma and follow-on care provided to the wounded and those affected by the loss of friends and colleagues through the Core Competencies Continuum of nurture the living, care for the wounded, and honor the dead.

To establish the core ministry actions requires a look at typical education in pastoral ministry among American seminaries, standards and expectations of endorsers, and the differences of practices between denominations. Further, there will be a close look at past and current training provided to new chaplains in the initial training course. Additionally, chaplain training from other armed forces will be assessed for its trauma ministry component.

The intent is to establish what should be done, regardless of the chaplain’s background/theological convictions, which will make the chaplain capable and competent to perform trauma ministry in a combat environment. Additionally, this
ministry performed must be sensitive to and meet the needs of the commanders, officers, and Soldiers in his or her care while mindful of the unit’s mission. This guidance cannot impose, or seem to impose, a framework that may violate somebody’s free-exercise rights as guaranteed in the Constitution.

While trauma does exist in all settings, both combat and garrison, as well as in the civilian sector, this thesis is concerned with combat trauma ministry. References to other fields of trauma ministry, when included, are included only to answer, “How can this help prepare chaplains for combat?”

The scope of this thesis is restricted to the ministry of Christian chaplains. An attempt to expand the scope beyond Christian chaplains is untenable with the potential myriad of religious practices and theological motivations from different faith traditions. I hope, and do believe however, that the findings of the research will be helpful to and inform the practice of all Army chaplains.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to develop a training plan for chaplains. Rather, I identify core elements, which should be included in the Army’s initial chaplain training course. More importantly, there will be an examination of these core elements and their theological and practical implications resulting in recommendations for the practice of ministry.

1.8 Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 – Introduction

In this chapter, I have introduced the suggestion that US Army Chaplains are not as prepared as they should be to perform “The United States Army Chaplain’s Role During Times of Traumatic Injury and Death in a Combat Environment”. Therefore, the Army must incorporate appropriate improvements to training to
prepare for military chaplains to competently perform trauma ministry in combat environments.

**Chapter 2 – Current Scholarship in the Field of Trauma and Ministry**

This chapter is a look at the current state of discussion on issues in trauma care. By exploring current trends and doctrines for trauma care in other fields, I will seek to identify universal standards. This chapter includes exploration of various works on pastoral/practical theology.

**Chapter 3 – Methodology**

In this chapter, I give detailed account of the course of research and methodology. Included will be the questionnaire, interviewee selection process, actual interview information, and how the data was recorded and transcribed. The chapter will also detail the scope of the research and make clear the assumptions and biases I had while researching and writing the thesis. Questions answered in this chapter will be:

1. What are the research methods best suited to this task?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen, qualitative research method?
3. How can the weaknesses be compensated for?
4. What ethical issues are involved and how can they be handled appropriately?

**Chapter 4 – Chaplain Qualifications and Training**

This chapter is a look at the sources of and standards for training in trauma ministry within the United States Army Chaplaincy. First, there is a short overview of the Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course (CHBOLC). The pre-requisite theological education and denominational requirements are explored. In order to
compare methods and priorities, the training of chaplains from Britain, Australia, and Canada is compared to the US Army’s program of instruction. The chapter will close with an exploration of follow-on training as provided within the Army.

**Chapter 5 – Experiences of Combat Trauma Ministry**

This chapter contains the narratives from the interviewed chaplains, Soldiers, and commanders. These are related to experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, perspectives from other conflicts are used to identify what trends in combat trauma ministry are universal. Key themes in combat trauma ministry will be developed from the experiences related in this chapter. These themes will be further explored with their theological implications in the next chapter, Issues in Combat Trauma Ministry.

**Chapter 6 – Issues in Combat Trauma Ministry**

Moving from what chaplains have personally experienced in combat trauma ministry to the theology behind their actions, this chapter reflects theologically upon the questions involved in providing ministry in the midst of a combat trauma.

**Chapter 7 – Conclusion: Application and Recommendations**

This chapter identifies opportunities for immediate application of the research findings. The following questions, answered in the chapter, give the research direct application to the practice of ministry. How will I use the knowledge to improve my own ability to perform “The United States Army Chaplain’s Role During Times of Traumatic Injury and Death in a Combat Environment”? How can I use this knowledge to assist my colleagues and, eventually, subordinate chaplains
prepare for combat trauma ministry? What recommendations can be made directly to the US Army Chaplain Corps to improve their programs of instruction?
Chapter 2 – Current Scholarship in the Field of Trauma and Ministry

To all readers I say: Learn the psychological damage that war does, and work to prevent war...Learn how war damages the mind and spirit and work to change those things.\(^{53}\)

2.1 Limitations to Current Scholarship

In the effort to find materials relevant to the thesis I, with the assistance of their respective research librarians, searched the libraries of Columbia International University, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, the University of South Carolina, The US Army Chaplain Corps Regimental Library, and the Moncrief Army Community Hospital Medical Library. To search for recent scholarship in the form of journal articles, I searched the ATLA Religion Database using the key words “Combat”, “Trauma”, and “Ministry.” I specifically excluded the term “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder” and its abbreviation “PTSD” as my intent was to find information on ministry at the time of trauma not the after effects. Even in trying to exclude PTSD from the search, the subject of PTSD is pervasive in the few materials discovered that are applicable to the research.

To seek the assistance of specialists, I sent requests for information to known leaders in the field of traumatology. Those requests were to Shelly Rambo of Boston University and Charles Figley of the Figley Institute. At the suggestion of a fellow chaplain, I also sent a request to Steven Lemke of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary who teaches a philosophy course dealing extensively with theodicy.

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The result of these searches is the determination that the subject of traumatic event ministry is without extensive scholarly literature. The applicable material I did find is referred to below. At first look, this lack of existing scholarship could seem to prevent locating the research for this thesis within the body of current scholarship. However, scholarship in the field of trauma, particularly trauma caused by exposure to and participation in combat, has been steadily growing since the war in Vietnam. This research is primarily in the field of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and its treatment. There are also the newer but growing bodies of scholarship examining the psychology of killing in combat, and the spiritual impact of combat sources of trauma. With knowledge gained from these sources, extant material in the field of pastoral/practical theology can be examined for core elements of Christian ministry that lend themselves to application to combat trauma situations.

The following survey of existing scholarship has three intentions. The first is to gain understanding of the current field of scholarship related to combat trauma and PTSD. The second is to do the same for the fields of the psychology of killing in combat and the spiritual impact of combat, with their effects on faith and ministry. The third is to demonstrate a need for further research in this area.

2.2 Works on Combat Trauma and Its Effects

Americans called it “Soldier’s Heart” during the United States Civil War. Throughout modern history, other names have been assigned to it. Those names include Shell Shock, Battle Fatigue, and Combat Exhaustion among others. Regardless of name, PTSD is a little understood, increasingly studied, and ever present challenge within the ranks of combat veterans. The more a chaplain knows
about PTSD, its causes and effects, the better the chaplain can prepare to perform his or her role during times of traumatic injury and death with the intent of mitigating the chances of PTSD developing in the Soldier. Furthermore, the knowledge will assist the chaplain to understand the likelihood of developing and safeguard against becoming a PTSD patient through appropriate self-care. Supervisory chaplains can likewise use the information to inform the method and content of pastoral care provided to subordinates.

Leading traumatologist, Charles R. Figley, PhD, has assembled and edited some of the most relevant and recent research in the field presenting them in the volume, *Combat Stress Injury*. The existing research makes clear the need for effective PTSD prevention and treatment. The death rates in a study conducted between 1985 and 2000 were over twice as high (11.8 percent vs 4.9 percent) for PTSD sufferers compared to non-PTSD patients. Of these deaths, 58.8 percent were alcohol related and 36.4 percent were drug related. PTSD sufferers also have less than honorable discharges at over twice (8.7 percent vs 3.6 percent) the rate of non-PTSD patients. Those reporting drug use while in the service were nearly five times as high (8.1 percent vs 1.7 percent).

Of particular interest for application to the current era of persistent conflict are the findings related to higher rates of combat exposure. Those veterans with

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56 Boscarino, 109.

57 Boscarino, 106.

58 Boscarino, 106.
“very high rates of combat exposure” suffered PTSD at over three times the rate of their low exposure combat colleagues (28.9 percent vs 9.1 percent). This statistic indicates that there is a high likelihood of PTSD problems because of the US Army’s ongoing practice of sending Soldiers on multiple long deployment tours with limited recovery time between them. An additional finding from the study group applicable to the US Army involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is the recruiting surge and associated standards during the build-up and sustaining of a larger fighting force. This increased the younger Soldier population and, for an extended period, reduced the standards for those serving. During this period, the Army allowed applicants previously ineligible due to low intelligence to enlist. The study by Boscarino indicates that young Soldiers suffer PTSD at a rate almost twice as high as older Soldiers (25 percent vs 12.6 percent) and that entering combat with a low IQ more than doubles the rate of PTSD (37.3 percent vs 18 percent).

These findings indicate that US Army will be dealing with PTSD related concerns from combat action in Iraq and Afghanistan for many years to come. It was once true that the Army stigmatized those who sought help in coping with their emotional responses to combat exposure. The Army, like the Royal Marines, “was under the clear impression that introducing trauma support policies would in turn open the floodgates and provide the shirker, the timid, and the malingerer to exhibit stress reactions in order to avoid doing their duty.” This attitude has shifted significantly however, now Army leadership accepts the reality of a duty obligation.

59 Boscarino, 106.
60 Boscarino, 106.
to treat and support those Soldiers psychologically affected by their combat exposure. This reality is a coupling of “moral responsibility” and “economic imperative”.\textsuperscript{62} This changing attitude within the Army has brought with it increased efforts to treat PTSD and more importantly to intervene at the time of trauma with the intent of reducing the development of PTSD.

As indicated in the research by Boscarino, the younger a Soldier is while in combat the more likely he or she will develop PTSD. This is understandable, as the typical teenaged American has rarely had to make a decision more important than the deciding of where to take a date, what job to try, or where to attend college. It is unheard of for a teenager in America to make operational decisions that will result in the taking and the loss of lives. “Given service members’ dedication to duty, it is incumbent upon behavioral health professionals to minimize service-related stressors, prevent long-term difficulties, and provide treatment when combat and operational stress interferes with the daily life of the service member.”\textsuperscript{63} Moore and Reger describe the Army’s effort to meet this obligation through the Combat Stress Control (CSC) team. The CSC is a multi-disciplinary team with the primary mission of preventing Combat Operational Stress Reaction (COSR) a precursor to the development of PTSD.\textsuperscript{64} Psychologists, occupational therapists, social workers, psychiatric nurses, and mental health and occupational therapy specialists make up the team.\textsuperscript{65} The unit chaplain joins the members of the CSC team when it arrives in the unit’s area of responsibility to treat those showing signs of COSR. “Working

\textsuperscript{62} March and Greenberg, 248.

\textsuperscript{63} Bret A. Moore and Greg M. Reger, “Historical and Contemporary Perspectives of Combat Stress and the Army Combat Stress Control Team” in \textit{Combat Stress Injury}, 162.

\textsuperscript{64} Moore and Reger, 167-170.

\textsuperscript{65} Moore and Reger, 172-174.
with medical and behavioral health personnel, the chaplain strives to meet the spiritual needs of soldiers who draw strength from faith, are seeking answers from a source higher than human knowledge, and those wishing to express their concerns, guilt, and other feelings with the protection of privileged communication.  

Concerning response to trauma intervention, Violanti writes that survivors need “to retreat to a safe place of physical and psychological support”. Violanti’s findings indicate a need to provide continued support and failure to do so “may account for the present finding that trauma in survivors does not significantly decrease over time”. The support identified as helpful was both tangible such as specific policies for dealing with trauma and intangible including emotional support and counseling. In the development of a team for the sake of dealing with traumatic deaths, Violanti advocates for the inclusion of “the chaplain, psychologist, [and the] head of the agency”. It is worth noting that the first person on the list is the chaplain. This study related to police agency traumatic death has important indications for combat trauma. The CSC team augmented by the unit chaplain and commander fulfill the same intent as the team described by Violanti. This model will provide the opportunity for comprehensive Soldier care during times of traumatic injury and death. The question remains as to the specific role of the chaplain during these times.

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68 Violanti, 79.

69 Violanti, 79.

70 Violanti, 80.
The Army has provided chaplains for Soldiers since the very beginning of the Army. This is a pattern copied from armies dating back to earliest days of recorded history. “However, the direct spiritual consequences of participation in war has only recently begun to be studied, as has the potential role spirituality may play as a healing resource for those recovering from war-zone trauma.”

Concerns raised by Drescher, et al, are theodicy and how a Soldier’s faith is challenged by his or her combat experience. The authors emphasize the need for an appropriate response to this Soldier need. “Theodicy is not a philosophical question to trauma survivors – it is real, tangible, and can be an obstacle to full recovery.” To help overcome this obstacle “the combat chaplain serves his or her soldiers by answering these concerns with well-developed explanations from the sacred text(s) for the presence and effects of evil in the world”. Additional concerns identified are changes in practice of faith, abandonment of faith, guilt and reduced comfort from faith and the recognition that chaplains and mental health providers have traditionally worked independently rather than collaboratively. Recognizing these realities, the research related to emotional and spiritual effects of combat and killing and the small but growing field of theology of trauma are important to the thesis.

One combat veteran declared, “Imagine what happens to your soul when it spends an entire year in a place with no beauty! It shrivels and dries up. It disappears. Without beauty your soul dies.” In another account, a combat veteran

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72 Drescher, Smith, and Foy, 296.

73 Rindahl, in The Encyclopedia of Trauma, s.v. “Combat Chaplains”.


shares how he feels his soul is troubled by the soul of a Soldier who died in his arms. “I had never watched a man die before, … Now I feel like I carry the man’s soul… I lied to him… I knew he was dying but I told him he would be all right instead of helping him face his death. Then, while the others stuffed him in a body bag, I just mopped up the bloody mess instead of honoring him.” The Soldier had been a medic during the war and had taken to the practice of sleeping on a dead man’s poncho liner (a thin, lightweight, quilted nylon blanket issued with a Soldier’s field gear) to prove he was not afraid or superstitious. Referred to as Ray in the book, this former medic sought out psychotherapy in the effort to return to a “normal” life.

How warfare affects the soul is the focus of this work by Dr Edward Tick. Drawing on both his training and experience as a psychotherapist and interest in spirituality in many varied forms, Tick weaves together a tremendous volume on this important subject. Tick uses many case studies from his own practice to validate his thesis that PTSD is better addressed as a personality disorder than the more common treatment methods currently in use. Tick further develops his point through a study of Soldiers through the ages. From the ancient Greeks and Romans, to knights on European battlefields, to Native Americans and Soldiers serving in modern armies, Tick presents a well-argued point that there are shared experiences, rites of passage, and rituals related to the profession of arms that are obvious to the combat experienced Soldier but absolutely bewildering to anyone without that shared experience. The trouble Soldiers face is brought to surface when they are

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76 Tick, 196.

77 Tick and Larry Dewey, War and Redemption (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2004), joins Tick calling for a different treatment model for combat veterans. They view combat related PTSD as a damaging of the soul, which requires redemption to repair.
incapable of returning to the personality suited for peacetime and are, instead, stuck with the personality which served them so well in combat.

This is an important work on the subject. Tick’s perspective is not the majority opinion but it is gaining ground in some circles. He claims great successes in the recovery rates among his own patients. When it comes to spirituality, Tick appears perfectly happy to draw from any source that connects with those he is treating. He seems to have a particular affection for Native American spirituality. This may be a result of its relatively recent place in American history as well as the many documented, elaborate rites and rituals among the warriors in the numerous American Indian tribes. Regardless, the identification of the combat veteran’s need to experience redemption and/or reconciliation as a source of healing is important to the chaplain. If the chaplain is aware of this need for reconciliation there can be a concerted effort to make available such support at the time of trauma. This, in turn, may reduce or even eliminate future PTSD response within the Soldier.

*War and the Soul,* as well as Dewey’s *War and Redemption,* has much to say in the field of ministry to combat Soldiers. Written with a view of PTSD treatment, the material presented gives a clear indication of the importance of ministry at the time of trauma. While there is much written today about PTSD, the majority of it has no reference to what can be done when the trauma occurs and how that can have a mitigating effect on post-trauma responses. This fact limits the value to the thesis of much of the PTSD literature in print today. Tick and Dewey, however, develop an argument for a PTSD treatment methodology that begins with the immediate actions at the traumatic event.

Grief is an emotional event most commonly responded to by intellectual advice. The advice may be fully true and simultaneously fully irrelevant. An
example of this is the comment to the parents of a stillborn infant that they “can try again”. It is in the face of this disparity between what grieving people need and what they are most frequently given that James and Friedman present their book.78

*The Grief Recovery Handbook* is the product of the Grief Recovery Institute founded by James after a family death in 1977. It is better to describe this handbook as a manual. The authors are quite clear in their instructions to follow through from beginning to end without reading ahead or skipping around. In doing so, James and Friedman expect the grieving reader to experience “completion and recovery rather than isolation and avoidance”.79 The volume has some great information for understanding how people act in response to grief. From outlining many of the causes of grief, our own lack of preparation in dealing with grief, and how others are ill prepared to assist with the grief process, James and Friedman make it abundantly clear that every loss is unique. Sharing a similar event does not mean one person knows how another feels. In fact, the authors insist that even if there is a similar grief experience it is of no emotional significance to the person currently grieving. “If this sounds harsh, it is intentional. We must try to stop intellectual connections from overpowering emotional truths.”80 The friends of Job fell into this very trap of answering emotional concerns with intellectual responses. Although they started well, being with Job in his grief, weeping with him, tearing their robes, and sprinkling the dust of grief on themselves they are sharing his burden. However, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, ultimately switched to telling Job what to do and as a


79 James and Friedman, 2.

80 James and Friedman, 40.
result, their value to him was eliminated.\(^{81}\) Their value is so damaged “that they become his enemies, ‘torturer-comforters’ as he calls them (16:2)”.\(^{82}\)

From there, the book goes on to identify common reactions in both the lives of grievers and those attempting to help. With that information and identified similarities in grief recovery process regardless of grief source, James and Friedman outline a recovery process, which values the integrity of the griever’s loss and how he or she can experience emotional restoration.

The authors challenge the use of Kubler-Ross for grief ministry.\(^{83}\) They contend that Kubler-Ross has been taken out of context and is intended only to assist a person in coming to peace with his or her own impending death. Therefore, the typically relied upon five stages of grief are not applicable to assisting the living with the grief process.\(^{84}\) Their argument would be stronger if Kubler-Ross herself did not apply the five stages to the grief process in her later work *On Grief and Grieving*.\(^{85}\)

For the purpose of this thesis, this book serves not as much as a how-to but as a “what not to do”. By knowing how to address the emotional need and avoid the typical intellectual traps involved in grief ministry, a chaplain will be better prepared to provide valued ministry at the time of traumatic injury and death. The advice given by the authors can be weighed against the experiences and desired support that

\(^{81}\) Job 2:11-13; 4 and following


\(^{83}\) The authors refer to the practice of using the five stages of grief identified by Kubler-Ross in *On Death and Dying*, MacMillan 1969, as “collateral damage”.

\(^{84}\) James and Friedman, 11-12.

Soldiers self-report. Further, how the advice meets or misses the stated need, will help direct the research regarding the theological implications of recovering from grief on one’s own. Is there a place for recognition that Jesus suffers for us? If so, where does this fit in the suggested process (if He fits at all) and what does the chaplain do with that answer?

Vital to a chaplain’s effectiveness is the understanding of the situation. LTC Dave Grossman is a leading expert in the field of killing in combat. His work *On Combat* has become a must read within the Army for good reason.\footnote{Dave Grossman, *On Combat*, 2nd ed. (Belleville, IL: PPCT Research Publications, 2007).} A human being that kills another human being without compunction is commonly considered to be a sociopath. There is a natural resistance to killing those of a member of a species by any other member of the same species. While this does not preclude it from happening, it certainly is not natural and as a result elicits strong emotional responses. Unlike other forms of life on Earth, humans not only have the natural occurring aversion to killing other humans, there are also morals, mores, and ethical standards which preclude such killing. With that fully understood, humans do kill each other on a regular basis. The combat of warfare is the most common place for such killing to occur and be declared acceptable and sanctioned by those in governmental authority. Even with this sanction the human mind typically reacts within the parameters of the natural resistance to killing. This creates emotional conflicts and ethical dilemmas in the lives of those called upon to do the killing.

Grossman, in this follow up to his work *On Killing*, does a superb job of exploring the many physiological and psychological factors unique to combat which affects a person’s reaction to killing and experiencing the death of others. Furthermore, there is the introduction of factors, which have changed the effects of
combat and its affect on those involved. As an example of how modern medical
technology has changed the battlefield, a story is told about “one man [who]
suffered a catastrophic wound to his rectum, prostate, anus, and bladder. The
ghastly injury plunged him into shock immediately, but one of the backpack medical
teams got to him right away and did a damage control surgery to stabilize him.
Then, he was put on an airplane equipped as a critical unit and flown a few thousand
miles to another hospital for another surgery to stabilize him. Then he was flown to
Germany for reconstructive surgery.” A Soldier who would have been dead in any
war prior to this one is, instead, home safely with his family.  

Between the naturally occurring effects of being involved in killing and death, the emotional
changes brought on by the fact that it is sanctioned and approved killing, and the
much higher number people surviving catastrophic traumatic injuries, Grossman
delivers what anyone involved in combat needs to know. He also recognizes the
spiritual element in his work and the lives of those touched by war as he quotes from
Romans 5 v3-5.  

Of particular interest in this book are the sections on taking time to heal and
the Judeo-Christian view of killing. While Tick and Dewey speak of the healing
benefits of ministry intervention at the time of trauma from the clinician’s point-of-
view, Grossman rehearses a similar position from the perspective of a combat
leader. 

Through extensive use of historical examples, Grossman demonstrates the
practice of Soldiers and warriors from numerous cultural settings, times in history,
and types of wars fought are resoundingly similar. There has been, prior to modern

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warfare, a regular use of informal Soldier-to-Soldier debriefing. In ages past, each evening was a break from battle and a time to reflect. This allowed for the sharing of grief and the celebration of life by discussing the battle and remembering the fallen. Grossman refers to this process as emotional mathematics claiming, “Pain Shared = Pain Divided, Joy Shared = Joy Multiplied.” Grossman identifies the operational tempo of modern combat as a threat to this healing process. With modern technology, it is possible, and even advantageous, to fight throughout the night. The chaplain aware of this fact can be proactive in providing opportunities for Soldiers to gather and share the grief and joy in response to the losses sustained in combat. Additionally, Grossman emphasizes the need for ritualized honors for the dead. While the Soldier may be expected, even required, “to keep a stiff upper lip” in all other settings, “Warriors weep at funerals” Grossman claims, “the first rule is that it is okay to weep at the funeral of a beloved comrade… We mourn briefly, intensely, and unashamedly, and then we get on with life.”

In the chapter dedicated to the religious implications of combat Grossman compares and contrasts a variety of Old Testament and New Testament texts resulting in the conclusion that Soldiers are “The lawful bearers of arms”. While Grossman is confident in his understanding of the scripture, he acknowledges the existing differences of opinion and how one’s beliefs directly influence the emotional response to combat.

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91 Grossman, On Combat, 305.
Grossman has not just researched this information, he has lived it as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Infantry, an Army Ranger and paratrooper. He is well versed in the profession of arms. His knowledge, so clearly presented, can save others years of learning on their own. Chaplains, so frequently insulated from actual combat engagements, will learn volumes about what is going on in the hearts and minds of the Soldiers they are called to serve.

The work brings value to the thesis. Incorporating the knowledge provided in this text into the practice of ministry will equip the chaplain to meet the true needs of his or her Soldiers. Grossman makes plain the realities of warfare and identifies many areas, some directly and some indirectly, in which the chaplain can provide the greatest level of ministerial care during times of combat trauma. Grossman provides the voice of combat experience coupled with extensive research. His work makes clear that there is a vital place for the chaplain in combat if the chaplain is intentional in providing ministry that actually meets the Soldiers’ needs. While Grossman makes clear the need for a chaplain, he does not elaborate on the role of the chaplain during times of trauma. Additionally, some may question or even refute his interpretation of the biblical passages he uses in his argument. The chaplain is provided with a good working knowledge of the need through Grossman’s work, but research into actual practices and their theological motivation is needed.

memoirs and significant research interviews with combat veterans, Jones, and independent researcher Beckman, develop insightful answers to these common questions. In doing so they reveal what many have experienced but few can express. As Jones and Beckman explore the combat trauma experience, they identify the numerous difficulties Soldiers have in sustaining faith, experiencing the presence of God, and reconciling the requirements of combat with Christian principles. The authors also review what Soldiers think of their various chaplains’ activities. This identifies what they did right and, more frequently, what they have done wrong.

The authors quickly dispel any idea that this will be a typical review of theology and combat which typically take “the path either of pacifism or just war theory”. While earlier efforts are applauded for what they do provide, the authors stress the point that just war theory and doctrines of pacifism are irrelevant to the Soldier in the middle of combat action. Instead, there is a concerted effort to examine a Soldier’s actual faith and its practice, or lack thereof, in a combat zone. As the title suggests, many Soldiers find themselves struggling to maintain faith or acquiescing to its abandonment while engaged in combat. Combat veterans “have seen that if combat drives some men to pray, it also turns church kids into unbelievers.”

Reporting on Soldiers’ prayers in combat, the authors eliminate any fanciful notions that such prayers are signs of spiritual piety or Christian devotion. There are Soldier admissions of praying to every deity they had ever heard of. There is also the acknowledgment that combat zone prayers are “that the battle will be over

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94 Jones and Beckman, ix.
95 Jones and Beckman, 3.
96 Jones and Beckman, 6.
quickly, that the incoming artillery will stop, that you will die without screaming, and that God will make the nightmare go away”. 97 There is also the telling admission from a chaplain who served in the Vietnam War that his daily prayer was “God, where are you?” 98

Christian imagery co-opted for martial purposes is another area of concern for the authors. There is the recognition that medals of valor and those of lesser importance are frequently crosses. The use of the cross of Christ has been a military practice since Constantine. Today, militaries the world over award Soldiers for their combat actions with cross-inspired medals. 99 This and other Christian imagery, as well as vernacular, finds its way into combat. The authors explore what theological effect this has on the Soldier.

People make the claim that “war is hell” through the ages and the message of the saying will rarely be argued against. That understood, one must examine the theological implications of the statement. Christian Soldiers cannot see Jesus ever firing artillery or dropping bombs. 100 “So, for Christian warriors, combat means, in some way, putting Jesus aside.” 101

Through the Soldiers’ own narratives, Jones evaluates these themes of Soldiers’ prayer, religious imagery attached to the materials of warfare, and the saying “War is hell”. Consideration is given to the presence of God versus a Soldier’s sense of luck, talisman, and recognition that hell is existence separated

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97 Jones and Beckman, 7.
98 Jones and Beckman, 7.
99 Jones and Beckman, 14-15.
100 Jones and Beckman, 25.
101 Jones and Beckman, 27.
from God and therefore the venerable saying implies (or flat out states) that God is not present in combat. When it seems the conclusion to the book will be “God has gone AWOL”, the final chapter insists “Yet, God is There”. In it, Jones identifies a warfighter’s “theology of combat”. This chapter identifies those that identify with a God that struggles with them and suffers for them; a God that did not choose the war but consoles the warrior and a crucified Christ who sacrificed for the benefit of others. This final chapter is of particular value to any chaplain trying to develop his or her own plan for ministry during times of combat trauma. Guidance that will help the chaplain develop a practice of ministry that will require the chaplain to embody the message that God, through Jesus, purposes to relieve suffering. Chaplain ministry that is genuine and responsive to the needs of combat trauma is to provide a direct view of the suffering servant who will bear the cross the Soldier must bear.

For the purpose of the thesis, this book has multiple values. First, it directly addresses the many different Soldier responses to combat and the traumas, both physical and emotional, sustained during combat. This work will provide many foundational points when developing the chapter on Soldier experiences. Furthermore, the honest reflection on how faith fits in the face of combat experiences will provide an assessment tool to evaluate a chaplain’s self-reported effectiveness.

Shelly Rambo is a professor of theology at Boston University’s School of Theology and a leading researcher in the field of theological response to trauma. *Spirit and Trauma* is her most recent work and is an exploration of how the Gospel

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102 Jones and Beckman, 24, 37.

103 Jones and Beckman, 49.
intersects traumatic events. Examining biblical witness to the day after the crucifixion, and a particular focus on the Gospel according to John, Rambo strives for a theology that addresses the needs of those enduring the aftermath of trauma.

Writing in reference to how trauma affects people regardless of the source of trauma, Rambo opens with two examples demonstrating the similarity of response. In one example Lee, a deacon from a local Baptist congregation, laments that in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina people are pushing the claims that New Orleans was back to normal. The trouble in this is that although “the storm is gone…the ‘after the storm’ is always here”. The second example highlights the experience of a combat veteran turned minister named Paul. Paul “claims that his deepest experiences remain untouched by the practices and teachings of the Christian faith…he wants the gospel – the good news – …to speak to his story and not erase it.” Whether it is a frustrating rush “to proclaim the good news before its time” or failing to “attend the realities of a death that does not go away,” Rambo asks, “Can theology witness to what remains?”

Rambo does what few others do; she acknowledges that trauma forever changes the traumatized. “No life after the storm is conceived apart from the storm. There is no access to life as it was before the storm. Instead the storm is always present.” This comment made in recognition of the traumatic effect of Hurricane Katrina, is easily translated to combat experience. Once a soldier has experienced

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105 Rambo, 2.

106 Rambo, 2.

107 Rambo, 3.

108 Rambo, 5.
combat, life cannot be the same as it was before the trauma of combat. A soldier can return to a normal peacetime life but it is a different normal than they lived before. Furthermore, Rambo identifies the weakness of the common practice of trying to give a theological response to trauma in the way of a discourse on theodicy. In a similar spirit to *The Grief Recovery Handbook* and its claim that intellectual answers to emotional responses are without value, Rambo explains a theodicy study’s ineffectiveness. “While theodicies provide logic for thinking through religious claims about God’s nature and human suffering, they do not function effectively to address and respond to suffering.”¹⁰⁹

Rambo warns against the frequent Christian response to death of moving directly from death to a conquering resurrection and the resultant “glossing over a more mixed experience of death and life…[as] it does not speak to the realities of traumatic suffering”.¹¹⁰ Rambo instead emphasizes a Christian message of good news in being able to theologize the middle. This good news “does not rest in either the event of the cross or the resurrection, but instead in the movements between the two…In this sense, theology is understood to be a healing discourse, a discourse that seeks to transform lived realities.”¹¹¹ In Rambo’s use of John this is seen in the piercing of Jesus’ side and the issue of water with the blood. Rambo states, “Water is associated throughout the Johannine text with life and, in turn, with the Holy Spirit.” Then she explains further that in this case of being joined with the blood “it is instead, a Spirit persisting between death and life”.¹¹² This persistence of life

¹⁰⁹ Rambo, 5.
¹¹⁰ Rambo, 7.
¹¹¹ Rambo, 8-9.
¹¹² Rambo, 81-82.
during the experience of death noted by Rambo is similar to the comments by Hippolytus that, “The Lord’s body furnished both sacred blood and holy water to the world…. This happened so that we might know the great power for life possessed by the power that inhabited this body that, even while dead, was able to pour forth to us the causes of life.”\textsuperscript{113} The critical difference is that Rambo sees the persistence of the Spirit witnessed “through the words and movements of those who remain”.\textsuperscript{114}

In Rambo’s method of theological interpretation of trauma, the trauma becomes the “hermeneutical lens through which an alternative theological vision of healing and redemption emerges…Trauma is the key to articulating a theology of redemption rather than the problem around which theology must navigate”.\textsuperscript{115} Rambo finds great value in the message of Holy Saturday, the middle day between the death and resurrection, for dealing with trauma. This middle day is “witness to a more complex relationship between death and life…Holy Saturday narrates a more indecipherable time and place in which death and life are brought into a unique relationship.”\textsuperscript{116} The traumatized is not left with the effect of death but the requirement to endure abandonment. Where was God the Father when Christ cried out as one abandoned on the cross or as he descended to the dead? This time in the middle is similar to the feeling of being separated from God described in God’s

\textsuperscript{113} Hippolytus, \textit{Fragment on the Two Robbers 1–2}. Quoted in Joel C. Elowsky, \textit{John 11-21}, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture NT 4b (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 327.

\textsuperscript{114} Rambo, 82.

\textsuperscript{115} Rambo, 11.

\textsuperscript{116} Rambo, 46.
Hiddenness in Combat. Rambo promotes the belief that to respond to this abandonment is to “enter into the sufferings of Christ”. 117

Rambo uses examples from the Gospel of John to indicate that even when the restoration begins it frequently evades recognition among the traumatized. Using John, “the beloved disciple”, and Mary Magdalene as prime examples, Rambo demonstrates how trauma interferes with understanding. Each was a witness to the resurrection yet they did not understand it. “Consequently, their witness is not defined by a clear and deliverable message, but instead by an encounter with what they do not – and cannot – fully know of the event.” The trauma became the lens through which they experience everything thereafter.

Ultimately, Rambo moves to the need for the traumatized to remain in God’s love. In one way, individual trauma is but a small sample of the biblical meta-narrative. The world was created “good, perfect, and innocent”. 118 The Bible is an explanation of God’s plan ultimately to restore His creation to its original state. In the middle we experience a broken creation, a creation that has been traumatized. Chaplain (CPT) Mike McCawly refers to this as the Soldier “living his life in the land of in-between.” 119 Just as God provides for the ultimate healing of His creation, he provides for the healing of the individuals within it. It is persistence of God’s love in the suffering that brings redemption rather than the suffering itself. 120

117 Rambo, 70.
118 Rambo, 152.
119 CH (CPT) Mike McCawly, open discussion, Warrior Transition Unit – Unit Ministry Team Standards of Care Symposium, September 2011.
120 Rambo, 158. Rambo, here, is adapting the work of Serene Jones in “Hope Deferred: Trinitarian Reflections on Infertility, Stillbirth, and Miscarriage,” Modern Theology 17, no. 2 (April 2001).
Spirit and Trauma contributes to the thesis for multiple reasons. Foremost it is unlike the great preponderance of works on trauma; it specifically speaks to the theology of trauma rather than having a mental health focus. This book brings theological insights to the spiritual experiences expressed in God’s Hiddenness in Combat. Using this work in concert with the other will help make clear appropriate ministerial responses during times of traumatic injury and death in combat. The work is, however, limited in its applicability to the thesis. The focus of the thesis is ministry during the time of combat trauma while Spirit and Trauma has a focus on the residual effect of trauma.

2.3 The Need for Further Research

There are extensive materials available related to PTSD from the clinical perspective. There is a very small body or work related to the spiritual effects of combat and the theology of trauma. There is a growing interest in the integration of the spiritual with the clinical, which previously was not considered. As the worlds of behavioral health and pastoral care each begin to recognize the value of the other the question of what a chaplain’s role is during the times of trauma grows. This is true in both the immediate ministerial response and the ongoing care trauma exposure necessitates. Unfortunately, what that role is and how it should be performed has yet to be defined.

The existing body of scholarship clearly indicates the value of spirituality in mitigating the effects of traumatic exposure in combat. Also demonstrated is the difficulty of maintaining faith when engaged in combat activity. Practically, the Army, and the American public as a whole, has a vested financial interest in reducing the effects of combat stress for the sake of preventing or mitigating the
severity of PTSD onset. There is also a strong moral obligation to the Soldiers who volunteer to serve and defend the nation. They should receive the best, most comprehensive, care the Army can provide through a multi-disciplinary team approach ensuring the Soldier has opportunity to have his or her needs met.

Theologically, the existing scholarship strongly indicates that combat is bad for the soul. The American public entrusts its sons’ and daughters’ spiritual welfare to the Army chaplain. It is therefore imperative that the US Army chaplain knows and performs his or her role during times of traumatic injury and death in a combat zone. Using the extant literature as a starting point, primary source research is needed to clarify that role.
Chapter 3 – Methodology

Practical Theology approaches particular situations with a hermeneutics of suspicion, fully aware that, when the veil is pulled away, we often discover that what we think we are doing is quite different from what we are actually doing. Thus through a process of critical reflection on situations, the Practical Theologian seeks to ensure faithful practice and authentic human living in the light of scripture and tradition.\(^{121}\)

3.1 Methodology Introduction

It is my belief that chaplains want to perform valuable ministry for the Soldiers and the officers they serve. Likewise, the officers and Soldiers that chaplains serve have expectations of their chaplains which, if not met, limit the ministry effectiveness the chaplains have with their units. I also believe that the disconnect that sometimes exists between chaplains, officers, and Soldiers is largely because existing chaplain training does not fully equip the new chaplain with crucial skills related to combat trauma ministry.

In order to test this hypothesis I researched the issue using qualitative research methodology. I selected this methodology because it is best suited for the development of a data pool reliant on the human experience, expressed by those having been part of the central phenomenon, in this case the participation in combat activities and the experience of combat trauma.\(^{122}\) The critical reflection resulting from this research helps pull away the veil and helps the chaplain discover how he

\(^{121}\) John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2009), v-vi.

or she can better fulfill his or her role during times of traumatic injury and death in a combat environment.

This chapter details the course and scope of research and methodology used. The ethical standards, interviewee selection process, interview information, and how the data was recorded and transcribed are all included. Interview questions for each category of participant and the ethical research guidelines are provided in the appendixes.

3.2 Course and Scope of Research

Research for this thesis is primarily qualitative in nature. The collection of personal accounts through interviews, examination of various memoirs and histories, and a study of the pertinent writing in the field created a pool of data. This pool represents the respective positions of chaplains, officers and commanders, and Soldiers. The interview of medical personnel with combat trauma experience and literature review process provides clinical perspective. The materials gained provide a way to cross-reference themes and determine priorities of ministry.

The scope of this research is limited to combat related traumatic injury and death. Its focus is Army chaplain training and combat trauma experience. It is beyond the scope to research other unique fields of trauma ministry response, as priorities and modalities in other forms of emergency services vary widely based on the circumstances of trauma and responding agency. The information from other agencies gained incidentally to the intentional research is incorporated when relevant.
3.3 Research Methodology Used

In this thesis I used qualitative research methods “which enable[d] [me] to explore the social world” of those affected by traumatic combat events.\textsuperscript{123} I believe the qualitative method best lent itself to finding the answer because of its focus on the study of problems in the social context. As this is a question relating to actions impacted by multiple pressures and expectations from a variety of sources, reliance on statistical findings did not lend itself to successfully developing knowledge in the field. Rather, the qualitative approach allowed for finding of the motivations and expectations of the persons and institutions involved.

The research is designed to inform the US Army chaplain’s practice of ministry during times of traumatic injury and death in a combat environment. As such, it is research into a specific event or activity and, therefore, the qualitative research is phenomenological. The intent of gathering data via personal interviews with those having direct experience with combat trauma was “to allow individuals’ lived experience… of events or activities to disclose themselves”.\textsuperscript{124} From this information, common structure or “essence” was identified and analyzed.\textsuperscript{125}

From chaplains, I learned to what extent they felt adequately prepared for what they were called to do and what they believe should be added to training requirements to better prepare future chaplains. Furthermore, because keeping oneself capable of continuing ministry is essential, I sought to determine what methods of self-care and external pastoral care were effective for the chaplains when facing their own needs. From Soldiers and commanders, I used similar methods to

\textsuperscript{123} Swinton and Mowat, 29.

\textsuperscript{124} Richard R. Osmer, \textit{Practical Theology} (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 52.

\textsuperscript{125} Osmer, 52-53.
determine what they expected from their chaplains and how well their chaplains met those expectations. In areas where the chaplains failed to meet expectations, I pursued suggestions from the Soldiers and commanders for improved pastoral care.

Qualitative research is often dismissed as “story telling” and “anecdotal”, without the rigorous standards of quantitative data collection, resulting in a data pool that may be skewed by subjectivity. Instead, qualitative research afforded the opportunity to make academic contribution through the mining of knowledge gained through human experience.\(^\text{126}\) Interviewing three distinct groups of people (Chaplains, Commanders, and Soldiers) overcame the inherent weakness of qualitative data collection. Identifying and interviewing these categories of participants provides the perspective of those performing ministry, those responsible for leadership, and those who would be the primary recipients of pastoral care. Fifty initial participation requests were sent out to personnel in each of the categories. Participation requests were then shared further and that is explained below.

Participation requests were sent to combat units throughout the Army including Light and Heavy Infantry, Cavalry, and Airborne forces, to get full-spectrum representation in the responses.

Subjectivity is a potential error affecting the research when seeking the opinions of the research participants. This error has the potential of skewing the results and invalidating the findings. Triangulation of data sources helps mitigate the chance of error when the mode of data collection is imperfect. In the research for this thesis, the imperfection of the interview is that, due to their duty positions, Chaplains, Commanders, and Soldiers will have differing opinions of chaplains’ actions during traumatic events. To rely on only one category of interview

\(^{126}\) Swinton, 31.
respondent would result in a body of data that defines a chaplain’s role through a narrow lens. The potential error of subjectivity that could occur if interviewing and gaining the perspective of only one of the groups was overcome through the developing of the three distinct data pools, each representing divergent points of view, and triangulating the data. Triangulating the data involved coding of the interview responses (see 3.3.6) and finding the common themes from the three sources of data. The triangulation of information gained in each of the three primary categories allowed me to identify where priorities of ministry expectations converged. From this, I developed an accurate representation of the chaplain’s role during times of combat trauma, as perceived by those within the US Army.

Furthermore, I assessed this finding against the published guidance in key sources in print and the experiences of our allied nations’ Army chaplaincies. In this way, I developed a clearer understanding of what the US Army expects of its chaplains in comparison to the larger field of knowledge and practice within combat trauma ministry.  

There was a limited use of quantitative data. This was primarily in the assessment of MDiv programs, their content, and the repeated themes in the interview answers were tabulated to determine trends among those interviewed. Quantitative data was also used to determine base opinions, e.g. “How many chaplain school students feel ready to engage in trauma ministry upon arrival?”; “How many chaplains feel that their training was adequate/inadequate preparation for engaging in trauma ministry?”

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3.3.1 Research Approval

In order to begin the conducting of research with human subjects, I submitted application to Spurgeon’s College/University of Wales via Dr Peter Stevenson in March of 2010. This included confirmation that the participants would be adults only, volunteers who freely give consent, that there were no inducements or coercion, and that there was guarantee of anonymity so identities could not be discerned from the collected data. Later in March of 2010 Dr Stevenson telephonically informed me that I could initiate my research.

I received ethical guidance from my chain-of-command (at the time research commenced) advising me to follow the ethical standards outlined by the teaching institution. The Army also required that the thesis be vetted by three bodies prior to distribution. First, Security (Mr Jay Pringle) to ensure no actionable intelligence was inadvertently included. Second, the Public Affairs Office (Ms Nichole Riley) to determine if there was any materials included which may require a PAO response. Finally, a review was conducted by the commander’s deputy (LTC Neil Page) providing the command situational awareness of the thesis content. These reviews were completed and allowance of unlimited release was granted.

3.3.2 Ethical Research Standards

3.3.2.1 Voluntary Participation

Conducting qualitative research involves, at least nominally, becoming involved or intruding upon other people’s lives. Research requiring direct

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128 I was initially enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry through Spurgeon’s College, which was, at that time, receiving validation for the degree from the University of Wales. I had already begun research and other preliminary work toward the thesis when the degree course and my enrollment was translated to the University of Chester.
engagement with human subjects has certain obligations, which the researcher must meet.

The first obligation is that participation must be voluntary. Coercion is both unethical and can invalidate the findings. Therefore, the participant must understand that they are being asked to participate and that there are no rewards for participating or negative ramifications for refusing.\textsuperscript{129} To meet this standard I solicited volunteers from outside my chain-of-command so that there could not be any hint of potential influence, positive or negative, upon those involved in the research. Every potential interview participant read and each actual participant signed for my records and received a printed copy of the approved ethical standards for his or her personal records.\textsuperscript{130} For those responding by e-mail, their submission by e-mail acted as their written consent to participate in the research.

3.3.2.2 Participant Anonymity

The next concern is anonymity for the participants. Confidentiality is essential for protecting the privacy and social/professional status (career protection is of absolute concern within the Army context) of those persons participating. To meet this need there must be established mechanisms to protect the privacy of the participants. To meet this standard every participant guaranteed complete anonymity, unless he or she volunteered to go on record for quotation. Permission to go on record was recorded in writing. Records of interviews and correspondence are held in confidence and references to them in the thesis are attributed to an ascribed pseudonym. Original transcripts of interviews and questionnaires and the

\textsuperscript{129} Rubin, 77, 78.

\textsuperscript{130} See Appendix B.
matrix assigning a pseudonym to each participant will be destroyed after the successful defense of the thesis. The rising challenge to anonymity is the increased use of digital media and electronic communication. I handled all electronic copies of correspondence (for those participating via e-mail) the same as I did transcribed interview records. This, however, leaves the participant in charge of the safeguarding or destroying of his or her own messages at point of origin if he or she considers the material sensitive.\textsuperscript{131}

3.3.2.3 No Harm to Participants

Finally, there is the requirement that no harm is done, physically or emotionally, to the participant. The participant must be protected from embarrassment, endangerment to their personal and professional relationships, damage to their career, and psychological harm.\textsuperscript{132} The already described anonymity provision safeguards against the bulk of these. I detail safeguards against psychological or emotional harm below. In my conducting this research, as a fellow Soldier, there is also the concern that the participants might be willing to share more than they would with a civilian researcher due to the rapport quickly gained between service members.\textsuperscript{133} This placed additional onus upon me to not pressure for an answer if a participant seemed reluctant to speak of certain events or feelings about them.

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\textsuperscript{131} Rubin, 82, 83. See also Merriam, 161, 162.
\textsuperscript{132} Rubin, 78.
\end{flushright}
Considerations specific to this research were in the realm of mental and emotional health. Although the number of cases of diagnosed PTSD are relatively low, recalling and speaking about combat trauma experiences can elicit a wide range of emotional responses. It would be counter to the intent of this research, which is to improve pastoral care to those who have suffered trauma, to traumatize the participants in the course of the research.

To meet the no harm standard, each interviewee retained the right to terminate the interview if he or she at any time felt uncomfortable with proceeding. I asked each participant to answer the questions as honestly and fully as he or she felt comfortable and secure in doing so, but not to bring up any events he or she knew to be emotionally bothersome and potentially hurtful to them. Questions that the participant did not answer were not asked again to avoid the appearance of pressure.

Closely related to this is the fact that some of those who passed the initial screening, were selected for interview, and agreed to interview, then declined. No pressure was brought upon them to participate. I did enquire of those in this situation if there were any need of the available support systems. None indicated any need for additional support. In the unlikely event that a participant needed care post interview, only persons with complete access to US military/Veterans Administration health care including psychological and psychiatric care were considered for interviews. Full access to chaplaincy services was guaranteed to ensure any pastoral care concerns, which may arise from the interview process, were met.
3.3.3 Participant Selection

As indicated above, primary source material was developed through the interviewing of three distinct groups of people: Combat experienced US Army Chaplains, US Army officers who commanded troops in combat, and US Army Soldiers who served in combat. Potential interviewees were initially screened through the following closed ended questions.

1. Are you a combat veteran?

2. Did your unit of assignment sustain casualties due to combat?

3. Are you willing to be interviewed regarding your combat experience including talking about the casualties?

4. Are you still serving in the Army or have access to Veterans Administration health and chaplaincy services?

A “no” answer to any questions eliminated the person from consideration. Sixteen chaplains, eighteen officers, and thirteen Soldiers met the screening criteria and provided answers to a semi-structured interview using open-ended fact-finding questions designated for each of the groups. I originally distributed initial screening questions to fifty potential interviewees in each category. From there many of those contacted referred others, both within their own category and in the other categories. Because of this, the final number of persons in each category that were contacted with the screening questions cannot be exactly determined.

3.3.4 Interview Design

The questions developed for the interview are reflective of my experience, and the experiences of others that they have shared with me, dealing with traumatic injury and death in combat (See 3.4). The interview was developed using both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions acted as a
primary screening and confirmed participant suitability for the research. The open-ended questions allowed the participants to talk about their experiences without leading them to a preconceived answer. The intent of the interview questions was to establish phenomenologically based narratives with exploration of both the concrete experiences of those involved and what they felt about the experiences. The result of the interviews is the creation of primary source material relevant to the body of research.

The interview questions allow for a semi-structured interview. The semi-structured approach ensures a covering of the focus of the research while allowing the participant opportunity to add anything that he or she may feel is pertinent. The interview questions are divided into three very similar groups. One set of questions is for the chaplains, one for the officers, and one for the Soldiers. The one for chaplains has more significant variations from the officer and Soldier interviews than the officer and Soldier interview questions have from each other, because the chaplain reflects on ministry performed, whereas the officers and Soldiers reflect on ministry observed. That acknowledged, there is significant overlap between all three sets of questions. This keeps all three groups focused on the phenomenon of combat trauma ministry. By interviewing a number of people from each of the three groups with a focus on the same phenomenon, it is possible to compare and contrast the answers of one against the other. This crosschecking is possible both within each group and between the groups. This interview structure allowed for the easy

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135 Seidman, 24.
identification of common themes between the groups and the triangulation of those themes to identify priorities of ministry.

The interview questions were formatted to maximize consistency between the participants, regardless if they answered in-person, by telephone, or by e-mail. Each option was given to the potential participant because of differing times of availability, distance, and the operational tempo of those volunteering to participate. The initial interview questions are in appendix F of this thesis.

3.3.5 Conducting and Transcribing the Interviews

At the start of each interview, the participant confirmed their voluntary participation and was reminded of the purpose of the research, the guarantee of anonymity, and the right to terminate the interview if he or she at any time felt uncomfortable with proceeding. Each participant was allowed to choose if he or she wished to be interviewed in person, by telephone, or via e-mail. Reflective of the current operational tempo of the Army, the majority asked me to e-mail the questions and returned their answers by e-mail as their schedules permitted. The e-mail method provided the easiest transcription as the answers were already typed. However, it was the most difficult for follow-on question for the sake of clarifying a point or gaining further information.

I interviewed three participants by phone. For those interviews, I copied by hand the answers to the questions as the participant answered. This interview method allowed for immediate follow-up questions but was subject to the possibility of inaccurate recording of an answer. In an effort to mitigate the possibility of inaccuracy I would read back responses to the participant as I finished writing them down. I have since learned of companies that record and transcribe telephone
interviews and would use such a service if I ever conduct telephone interview based research again.

I also interviewed three participants in-person. During the face-to-face interviews, I recorded the interview using a digital voice recorder and transcribed the answers upon completion. In-person interviews allowed the greatest ability to ask follow-on questions, to interact fully with the participant, and to gain great accuracy in the transcription of answers. The top challenge to this method was the coordinating of schedules and locations.

In both the phone and in-person interviews, the questions were read directly from the interview sheets and the participants were allowed to answer as fully or minimally as they desired without interference. This was to best simulate the e-mail respondents’ ability to answer without outside influence. The intent of this was the minimizing of variations in response caused by the variations in mode of questioning.

I contacted a small number from each category for follow-on questions. Two chaplains and three officers provided additional information. During the course of interviews, two US Army nurses and one US Army surgeon contributed answers based on their experiences with US Army chaplain ministry while they provided medical care to wounded Soldiers in combat.

3.3.6 Coding and Tabulating Data

Silverman and Rubin each give excellent guidelines for coding and tabulating data gained through qualitative research.$^{136}$ In the coding of my research

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$^{136}$ Silverman, 273-290; Rubin, 482-485.
data, I used what Silverman calls a “Thematic analysis”, although there is a small bit of overlap with what he refers to as “Interpretative phenomenological analysis”.\textsuperscript{137}

I began by dividing my interview transcripts into their respective categories, chaplains, officers, and Soldiers. From there I began creating my codes, which reflect the concepts expressed by the participants in each category.\textsuperscript{138} Initial codes were training received, pastoral care received, self-identified priorities, performed or observed actions, and perceived value of those actions. In each of these codes, key labels or concepts were identified.\textsuperscript{139} I did this through a “key word” type search. A key word, such as “rock”, was identified and then it, and any thematic synonym such as “anvil”, were coded together as “concrete imagery” and sub-coded as “positive attributes”.\textsuperscript{140} The creation of thematic codes allowed for the comparison of themes across the groups and the tabulation of the data. As a secondary effect, thematic coding creates a filter by which anomalies, such as the chaplain who did not perform ministry but instead berated an officer, are quickly identified.\textsuperscript{141} The developed themes and their frequency gave the foundation for identified priorities of ministry, recommendations to the Army Chaplain Corps, and guidance for my own future actions as a chaplain and eventually a supervisory chaplain.

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\textsuperscript{137} Silverman, 274, 275. \\
\textsuperscript{138} Rubin, 483. \\
\textsuperscript{139} Silverman, 278. See also Rubin, 484. \\
\textsuperscript{140} See Shane at 5.3.2 and following. \\
\textsuperscript{141} See Peters at 5.3.5 and following. 
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3.3.7 Selecting Examples to be Used in the Thesis

No attempt was made to have the examples selected numerically reflect the propensity of any particular theme. Instead, samples were taken representing positive and negative experiences that best expressed what chaplains have done well and have failed to do well. In chapter 5, “Experiences of Combat Trauma Ministry”, each category, chaplains, officers, and Soldiers, includes a narrative that includes a short tabulation of the key themes. The reader must rely on the tabulations to have a full understanding of the depth of the materials presented.

3.4 Biases and Assumptions

The Army exists, the chaplaincy is an official branch within the Army, and wars occur. Faith provides insight “upon the conflict between good and evil men and upon the conflict between just and unjust nations… and we have no reason to be ashamed for including it in our Christian life”. This thesis accepts these realities and is designed to help the chaplain discern how he or she should best perform combat trauma ministry in light of these realities.

I have been a US Army chaplain on active duty since 2005 and am quite satisfied in my position. During my time in the Chaplain Corps, I have deployed to one combat environment, Iraq (October of 2006 through January of 2008). While low in comparison to casualty counts from previous conflicts, with seventeen Soldiers and one local interpreter killed during that span, the 1st Battalion of the 5th Cavalry Regiment (1st Cavalry Division) was one of the harder hit battalions serving in Iraq during the Surge. I recognize that my own experience is limited and that each chaplain’s deployment experiences are unique. I acknowledge that the number

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of casualties that we sustained has deeply influenced my outlook on ministry. It has also shaped what I expect of others in relation to their role as chaplains.

For the past three years, I have had the opportunity to teach Religious Support to the Wounded and Dying to Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course (CHBOLC) students as a guest lecturer. My perception of the inadequacy of the training I received and my combat experience has shaped the content of the currently offered training. The teaching experience has given me exposure to the current incoming students and a greater understanding of the difficulty in developing significant changes to the Program of Instruction (POI).

My priorities of loyalty in providing ministry influence my own ministry actions and the ministry actions I expect from others. My priorities are first, to be faithful to the Word of God. Next, to consistently proclaim the overarching Christian message of grace, forgiveness, and salvation, to the Soldiers I serve. Finally, is my loyalty to my particular denomination and its doctrinal positions.

Freedom of religious practice is a guaranteed right of each resident of the United States. The constitutional restriction on the establishment of religion is to prevent a particular state-funded, entwined, or otherwise official form of faith and practice from emerging. The constitutional right to exercise freely the faith of one’s choice applies as equally to Soldiers as it does to civilians, and to chaplains as well as those they serve. This right extends to any location in which the Soldier performs his or her duty when he or she travels at the direction of the military.

I assume that all chaplains serving in the US Army Chaplain Corps have experienced some form of call by God upon their lives and desire to serve God in answer to that call. In this case, that is by serving Soldiers.
Chapter 4 – Chaplain Qualifications and Training

“I want to see that hereafter no Chaplain is appointed to the Army (and Navy) who is not a first class man – a man who by education and training will be fitted to associate with his fellow officers, and yet had in him the zeal and the practical sense which will enable him to do genuine work for the enlisted man. Above all, I want Chaplains who will go into this work just as the best officers of the line or staff or medical profession go in to do their work. I want to see that if possible we never appoint a man who desires the position as a soft job.”

4.1 US Chaplain Qualification Standards

Much has changed between the writing of this letter by then President Theodore Roosevelt. Most visibly, there is no longer a restriction limiting the chaplaincy to men. More importantly, methods of training clergy, denominational expectations concerning education and experience, and Army’s specific requirements for chaplains have all evolved over the years. Taking note of these changes, the bottom-line remains the same. Chaplains serving in the Army must meet significant professional standards of education, experience and training. Furthermore, the chaplain through meeting these standards needs to be able to traverse seamlessly the full spectrum of military personnel, being as at home with senior officers as junior enlisted Soldiers. This chapter discusses the requirements established for chaplains by the Army. This is followed by a review of how seminaries and endorsers meet those requirements and what training the Army provides to new chaplains upon entry. For purpose of comparison, this chapter will close with a brief look at the recruiting standards of some allied nations’

143 Theodore Roosevelt, a letter to the Secretaries of War and of the Navy, 10 June 1902.
chaplaincies and the trauma-related training those armies provide their chaplains during their respective initial chaplain training courses.

4.1.1 United States Army Chaplain Recruiting Standards

The US Army selects clergy for the chaplaincy based on a board process. Men and women who desire to become chaplains must submit a packet to the Chaplain Accessioning Board. Each applicant’s packet receives evaluation in comparison to all other applicants’ packets. The board strives to select those best qualified for selection as Army chaplains. The criteria required of anyone who submits a packet are found in Appendix C (the Chief of Chaplains can authorize waivers to these standards to meet specific religious needs the Army may experience).

These prerequisites provide a broad framework intended to ensure the Army selects chaplains from a pool of educated and experienced applicants. Note that it is up to each endorser to confirm the qualifications of the applicant and the educational requirements are variable. This is an important allowance of flexibility. Chaplains must be qualified within their own denominational standards and practices to be truly qualified clergy of that denomination. Furthermore, the educational emphasis of different denominations greatly influences what seminaries teach and from which theological/doctrinal perspective.

With the strength comes a corresponding weakness. Denominations vary radically in their ordination standards. Some, such as Roman Catholics and Orthodox, have stringent selection, training, and experience requirements established through their church hierarchy. Other denominations, which doctrinally teach local church autonomy, do not have an overarching structure that establishes
minimum requirements for ordination. Each local congregation is free to elect whom to ordain and why without regard to any external requirements. There are also organizations that provide ordination to those desiring to be chaplains without specific church membership.¹⁴⁴

Seminaries also vary in their requirements. Although accredited seminaries follow a general outline for the program of instruction in their Master of Divinity (MDiv) programs, what each teaches, and to what level of academic rigor, is not uniform. It is understandable that course content is different in Roman Catholic seminaries from that in Protestant seminaries and further variations exist between the various subdivisions of Protestants. Not as easily understood are the differences between the academic standards seminaries hold. These variances create noticeable differences in the intellectual acumen between chaplains. These program differences, those understandable and those not, demonstrate the reality that not all MDiv’s are equal. With the addition of specialized programs specifically designed to meet the seventy-two semester hours of theological or religious studies requirement, but without external degree plan guidance, it is difficult to gauge accurately the content and quality of the qualifying degree.

Recognizing the challenge created by these variations, the following sections review endorser requirements for chaplain eligibility, the declared minimum standards of Association of Theological Schools (ATS) accredited seminaries, which is still the most common means of achieving a quality theological education, and the

seventy-two hour military chaplain program offered by Liberty University.\textsuperscript{145} Liberty’s program is the most popular offering of this type with more than 1,000 students enrolled (approximately 30 students are on-campus residents. The remaining, nearly 1,000, students complete all course requirements online).\textsuperscript{146} “Liberty is not accredited by the Association of Theological Schools, the national accreditation agency for graduate-level seminaries. Instead, it is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The Department of Defense requires only that seminaries that train chaplain candidates be listed with the American Council on Education, which is not an accrediting body.”\textsuperscript{147}

4.1.2 Endorser Standards

The endorser has two primary responsibilities in regards to chaplain qualifications. One is to confirm the qualifications of clergy applying to become chaplains. Effectively the endorser is the “gate keeper” for the Army, making sure that each applicant is educationally qualified and has the required experience to function effectively in the Army as a chaplain. The second is ensuring the potential chaplain has gone through sufficient pastoral formation and will be true to the teaching and theological/doctrinal standards of the church he represents. Congruent with this standard is the endorsers’ responsibility to discern the spiritual maturity of the applicant and his or her ability to work in the pluralistic military ministry setting.

\textsuperscript{145} Endorser requirements as self-reported; ATS accreditation is the highest level of accrediting for theological schools in the United States.


\textsuperscript{147} Townsend.
The chaplain must be able to demonstrate professional courtesy to chaplains from divergent faith backgrounds and provide appropriate pastoral care to members of all faiths while remaining true to his or her own denominational distinctives.

I sent eighty-seven requests for information to endorsers and received twenty replies. Endorser responses indicate a general conformity in standards. The traditional MDiv is still the standard among most, but five of the respondents indicated a willingness to accept the newly allowed shorter program. One respondent includes one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in addition to the MDiv in order to receive endorsement. Six respondents indicated that they allow the use of “wash letters”. A wash letter is a letter from an accredited seminary stating that they will accept the work completed at a different seminary as equivalent to their own. Wash letters are used to validate international credentials such as those held by a Roman Catholic priest who studied in Rome. Wash letters are also used to make qualified an otherwise disqualified applicant if his or her education credentials are from a non-accredited seminary within the United States. “Washing” US based schools is a controversial subject as it raises the questions of why the school attended did not seek or achieve accreditation and why the applicant chose to attend a school that does not hold accreditation.

None of the responding endorsers requires any training in trauma ministry prior to endorsement although one is considering it. Two respondents indicated an expectation that the Army would provide requisite training in trauma ministry upon entry to the chaplaincy. The remainder indicated no specific expectations as to education or training in the field of trauma ministry.

148 See Request for Information in Appendix D.
Each endorser indicated compliance with the two years of post seminary vocational ministry standard. However, the ministry placement is not uniform. For some it must be as a pastor or associate pastor of a local congregation, for others missionary work or youth ministry satisfies the requirement. This further complicates any attempt to estimate the actual experience level of the chaplain applicant. It is reasonable to expect a person filling the role of pastor has at least dealt with the effects of death and dying, even if not as result of trauma. One cannot reasonably expect the same of those in mission work or youth ministry. The result is an endorsement process that gives assurance that clergy applying to the Army chaplaincy are experienced and qualified within their denominations. However, there is not a guaranteed uniform level of experience.

Endorsers demonstrated their own denominational priorities as well as respect for others when answering what they expected from their chaplains. David Mullis, of the Southern Baptist Convention, indicated that a Southern Baptist chaplain would likely ask a wounded/dying Soldier if the Soldier knew Jesus Christ as savior. He would consider revoking the endorsement of any chaplain who was “insensitive and uncaring for the soldier, fellow soldier or family of the soldier.” George Morelli, of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church, expects those he endorses to provide for spiritual needs of the wounded Soldier while working in cooperation with the attending medical personnel. He further expects the chaplain to uphold church’s standards of advocating the sanctity of life. “If an Orthodox Chaplain should, for example, allow ordinary necessary life maintaining support to be withdrawn from a critically injured patient or say that euthanasia in some form

149 David Mullis, Southern Baptist Convention, Answers to request for information, 21 February 2011.
were acceptable, not only would they no longer be able to serve as a Chaplain, but be laicized (forbidden to act as a priest). Endorsers consistently provided answers that, as these examples indicate, upheld denominational standards but equally protected the integrity and provided for the specific needs of the wounded Soldiers. This is important to note as it provides implied parameters for training standards. Furthermore, many chaplains have beliefs about what their endorsers allow and what they prohibit which are not supported by the answers the endorsers provided. The result is many chaplains falsely believe that they must avoid certain ministry opportunities for fear of endorser reprisal. Although this is only a sampling of the total number of endorsers, the near uniformity of opinion indicates a prevailing attitude among endorsers of allowing chaplains to do what they feel needs to be done to meet the needs of wounded Soldiers.

The endorsers gave no indication of a willingness to relinquish their autonomy in determining ministerial qualifications for their potential applicants. However, the fact that the answers provided by the endorsers were so closely aligned, it seems a reasonable request that a joint statement of pastoral response expectations could be issued. That, if issued, would make the development of training standards with minimum expectations as well as chaplain self-policing of pastoral care a more tenable objective.

4.1.3 Theological Education

ATS requires the following standards for MDiv programs offered by accredited seminaries. The program consists of three years of full-time study of

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150 George Morelli, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church, Answers to request for information, 23 January 2011.
which, the student must study for one year at the seminary’s main campus or a
residential extension campus. “The MDiv program should provide a breadth of
exposure to the theological disciplines as well as a depth of understanding within
those disciplines. It should educate students for a comprehensive range of pastoral
responsibilities and skills by providing opportunities for the appropriation of
theological disciplines, for deepening understanding of the life of the church, for
ongoing intellectual and ministerial formation, and for exercising the arts of
ministry.”

In order to determine how individual seminaries implemented ATS
guidelines, evaluation was made of the degree plan in thirty-two course catalogs.
The faculty for pastoral care/theology of ATS accredited seminaries were contacted
to provide greater insight as to course content. I submitted one-hundred-thirty
requests for information to seminary faculty and received forty-seven responses.

The degree plans for the MDiv at different seminaries are remarkably
similar. The degree typically consists of ninety semester hours with a few in the
eighties and few over ninety but below one-hundred. Each contains a biblical
studies component primarily comprising of Old and New Testament surveys,
biblical languages and elective book studies; a theology component consisting of
Systematic Theology and Church History; a practical/pastoral theology component
including the running of a congregation, preaching, and counseling; and a block of
semester hours left open for elective classes selected by the students to study any of
the primary components in more depth. The catalog description from Northern
Baptist Seminary is representative of the theme of the pastoral ministry classes

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151 “ATS Degree Program Standards.” For detailed description of standards, see Appendix E.
offered in ATS seminaries. “MN 540 Practice of Pastoral Ministry: This course will
focus on the call, nature, and primary components of pastoral ministry. Through
lectures, readings and discussion students will examine habits, skills, and
responsibilities associated with effective pastoral leadership.”152 Holy Cross Greek
Orthodox School of Theology delivers its pastoral care education over two
semesters but the content, by course catalog description, is nearly identical.153 The
individual professors typically determine whether the class content includes
materials related to the general subject of death and dying or specifically trauma
ministry. Dr Judith Schwanz, professor at Nazarene Theological Seminary, spends
“one class session (3 hours) in Pastoral Care and Counseling dealing with death and
bereavement. [during which they] talk about the Tasks of Grief, “what NOT to say”
(and some of the poor theology that people reveal in the dumb things they say!), the
importance of ritual and lament, the ministry of presence, how to lead a
congregation to care for each other in times of loss… Students role play in small
groups having a person in crisis call the pastor.”154 This one class session on the
subject is typical of those who responded and claimed any specific death and dying
content.

A sizable minority of seminaries include one unit of CPE. CPE provides for
a structured source of training through a ministerial placement in a clinical setting.
CPE can be an excellent source of practical ministry experience with quality
supervision and direction thus allowing for the formation of a student’s theology and

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152 Northern Seminary Catalog, (Lombard, IL: Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009-2010), 93.

153 Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology Course Catalog, (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, 2010-2011), 45-46.

154 Judi Schwanz, Nazarene Theological Seminary, Answers to request for information, 25 January 2011.
practice of ministry. The clinical setting is most frequently a hospital. Whether the hospital has a trauma center or emergency room is not a requirement. Therefore, the student may or may not receive any experience in the field of trauma ministry.

Many seminaries do include the option to take additional classes in the field of pastoral ministry that address some of the concerns related to traumatic events. Boston University is most notable with their chaplaincy Master of Sacred Theology (STM) program developed specifically for chaplains. In that program, there is a class on “Theology and Trauma” and they have a program on “Religion and Conflict Transformation” which includes a healing from trauma component.\textsuperscript{155} It is important to recognize the value of these classes and others like them as potential sources of valuable education to which chaplains can avail themselves. It is equally important to remember that these classes are optional electives or make up advanced degree programs over and above the requirements established for entry into the chaplaincy.

In review of the educational requirements of ATS seminaries for the award of the MDiv, it is obvious that there is no distinct and sustained education in the field of trauma ministry. This is not a flaw in the degree program. The MDiv is the first professional degree of those entering pastoral ministry. The trauma seen in trauma centers, emergency rooms, and in combat is rarely, if ever, seen by a local parish minister. Clergy typically deal with death far removed from the event that caused it. Comforting the surviving family members is priority and the minister is unlikely ever to see the body until the pre-funeral visitation. A seminary that put extensive effort in educating future clergy for trauma ministry would be providing a skill set that the student would likely never use. The concern this raises for the

\textsuperscript{155} Shelly Rambo, Boston University, Answers to request for information, 12 January 2011.
chaplaincy is that the prerequisite degree for chaplain duty does not provide the applicant with an education in the performance of a critical chaplain competency.

Liberty University offers a specialized “Chaplain Track MDiv”. As stated earlier, this is a shorter program of seventy-two hours compared to the approximately ninety semester hours of the typical ATS accredited seminary MDiv. The Liberty curriculum is similar to a traditional MDiv but many classes are removed to reduce hours. The Liberty program has no biblical studies requirements beyond the survey classes, there is no hermeneutics class, no biblical language requirements, and no room for elective classes. There are two church history classes but no denominational history or identity classes required. In contrast to a traditional MDiv, the Liberty program has two chaplain specific classes and a chaplaincy practicum. The catalog descriptions for the classes are as follows.156

CHPL 500 Introduction to Chaplaincy Ministry 3 hours
Examines the theological and cultural issues of a formal and informal ministry setting. Explores the similarities and differences among the various types of chaplaincies. Gives attention to ministry in religiously pluralistic, multicultural and multi-staff environments. Emphasizes skills, strategies and character traits necessary for effective ministry.

CHPL 696 Chaplaincy and Pastoral Ministries 3 hours
This course provides an overview of the numerous ministries provided by military and industrial chaplains and pastors of the local church. The procedures, protocol and the “how to” do these ministries will be covered. Emphasis will be on collaborative learning experiences so that students can learn how to care effectively for their congregation and their community at large.157

It appears that these classes address the specific needs of chaplain ministry, which would include trauma ministry. It is impossible to tell if a significant trauma component is included without a copy of the syllabus or instructor provided.

156 The Liberty University Graduate Catalog provides no description of the practicum.

157 Liberty University Graduate Catalog, (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University, 2009-2010), 172.
information. A request for information received no response. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to debate the academic value of the traditional ATS MDiv in comparison to the Liberty Chaplain Track MDiv. Regarding the preparation for chaplain ministry, the Liberty program seems to provide the chaplaincy minded student an educational option focused on the intended field of ministry just as the traditional MDiv focuses on civilian parish ministry. In contrast, the program appears to jettison important elements of theological education that are formative to ministerial identity and the ability to frame questions and concerns in a theological context. These, it would seem, are crucial to effective ministry regardless of setting and particularly so during times of trauma. Complicating the question further is the fact that Liberty Baptist Fellowship, an allied ministry of Liberty University, is a Department of Defense authorized endorser. This raises concerns of a conflict of interest when, in effect, the institution provides endorsements for its graduates and the program is specifically designed to create chaplains.

In summary, the required theological education cannot be expected to educate the potential chaplain in trauma ministry. Trauma ministry is highly specialized and rarely experienced by the majority of those in ministry and therefore beyond the scope of typical theological education. Combine this fact with the reality that a local parish minister is unlikely ever to experience trauma ministry and that endorsers do not have expectations that the clergy they endorse are experienced in trauma ministry, there can be no anticipation of entry-level chaplains having competency in this field. This leaves the Army to train new chaplains to a level of competency prior to their assignment as chaplains with the potential of deployment.
4.1.4 The United States Army Chaplain Officer Basic Leadership Course

Chaplain Officer Basic Leadership Course (CHBOLC), formerly known as Chaplain Officer Basic Course (CHOBC), is the initial entry training program for all US Army chaplains.\textsuperscript{158} The Program Of Instruction (POI) is twelve weeks and four days in length. The POI includes initial military training, training on the specifics of being an Army officer, and training designed to adapt existing ministry skills to a military setting as well as introduction of new skills unique to providing pastoral care to Soldiers. In the current POI, the equivalent of one day of trauma ministry training exists among the total of eighty-eight days.\textsuperscript{159}

The CHBOLC POI includes a three-hour classroom lecture period teaching “Religious Support to the Wounded and Dying” and a four-hour practical exercise consisting of a Mass Casualty (MASCAL) simulation. The lecture portion of the training is delivered three to four days prior to the MASCAL simulation.

The lecture portion, “Religious Support to the Wounded and Dying” covers both the logistical details the chaplain must perform and begins the discussion of what a chaplain will do in response to a traumatic event and why. The student chaplain learns about reports to file, how to determine the religious preference of a wounded/dying Soldier, and how to interact with members of the medical personnel, command and administrative personnel, and their chaplain colleagues when the number of wounded exceeds personal ability to provide proper ministry response. From there, the lecture moves to a series of casualty photographs and accompanying description of the wounds. During these vignettes, the student chaplains must

\textsuperscript{158} During the interviews with chaplains both terms are used depending upon when the chaplain attended their initial entry training.

\textsuperscript{159} Interviews with multiple chaplains indicate that previously there was no training on trauma ministry in the program of instruction.
answer what they believe they will do in a similar situation. The discussion then advances further, asking the student chaplains the “why” behind the “what” with the intent to get the student chaplain to think through the personal, doctrinal, and denominational factors at work that influence the actions they intend to perform.

The four-hour MASCAL practical exercise portion is in a field environment. The training is in two portions. The first portion is a series of stations, which presents the student chaplain with a series of trauma ministry challenges allowing hands-on practice. These stations include one with Soldiers expected to die within moments, another with Soldiers who will live but be disabled or disfigured, and one interacting with the commander in response to suffering casualties. Once these stations are complete, the student chaplains prepare for enemy contact and a battlefield simulation ensues. With rocket and mortar simulators exploding, smoke canisters obscuring vision of the field, and simulated wounded screaming for aid, the student chaplains must enter the fray and meet the ministerial needs of the casualties.

Once complete, student chaplains consistently praise this training through the process of After Action Reports (AAR).\textsuperscript{160} It works to establish a more complete understanding of traumatic event ministry and encourages student chaplains to think about the reasons for doing what they do and how those priorities may be challenged at the time and place of a traumatic event. Furthermore, the efficacy of this training received validation in \textit{Protecting the Force} an independent study of the mass casualty producing shooting at Ft Hood, Texas, 05 November 2009.\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{160} The After Action Report (AAR) is the standard method of informal on-the-spot review of what went right and what went wrong during any event in which Soldiers participate.

\textsuperscript{161} Protecting the Force: Lessons from Ft Hood (Washington DC: Department of Defense, January 2010).
“examination underscored that the Chaplain Corps has a great deal to offer in a mass casualty situation.” Furthermore, “The Fort Hood Installation Chaplain noted that three new chaplains performed exceptionally well during the November 5, 2009, mass casualty, and he credited their success to the training they received at the Chaplain Basic Course.” This is very favorable feedback and the current course design is certainly better than what it was previously. However, once the student chaplains have received the training, AAR comments consistently reveal a desire for more training on the topic. Particularly, student chaplains indicate a desire for increased realism where the ministry skills are truly tested.

Prior to the delivery of this instruction a recent class of CHBOLC students were surveyed as to their level of comfort and experience with trauma ministry. Eighty chaplain students representing fifteen denominations had the opportunity to answer if they felt comfortable in trauma ministry, if they had existing trauma ministry experience, and, if so, what that experience included. Fifty-nine students indicated that they believed themselves ready to perform trauma ministry. Of that fifty-nine, forty-five claimed prior trauma ministry experience. Those numbers appear to assuage the concerns mentioned earlier of a lack of education or experience gained while in the pastoral office. However, once the examples of trauma ministry are assessed the numbers change drastically. Upon removal of funeral services, prayers with family away from the scene or cause of death, and regular pastoral visits to sick parishioners, the amount of trauma specific experiences totals four.

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162 Protecting, 6.

163 Protecting, 46.

164 June 2009.
These numbers reveal a few points important to the chaplain corps and those responsible for training. First, 73.75 percent of student chaplains feel as if they are prepared for trauma ministry, 56.25 percent believe that they have experienced and performed trauma ministry, but only 5 percent actually give traumatic events as examples of the trauma ministry performed. Understanding these numbers reveals that there is a significant lack of understanding as to the nature of true traumatic event ministry. Furthermore, in spite of the lack of education, experience, or training, student chaplains are overwhelmingly confident in the ability to perform effectively trauma ministry. The first point is understandable as trauma experience is largely outside of the collective body of knowledge in local parish ministry. As a result, chaplain-training cadre must expect the student chaplains to lack proper understanding of trauma ministry. The second point, confidence in competence without any identifiable reason to expect competence, is reflective of the Dunning-Kruger Effect, which demonstrates that a person’s lack of knowledge inversely increases his or her own confidence in the very field in which they are ignorant.¹⁶⁵ Both factors add impetus to the Army Chaplain Corps ensuring adequate quality training occur early in the chaplain’s career. Some may argue the current POI at CHBOLC provides this training. However, the student chaplains themselves indicate a desire for more extensive training on the topic. Furthermore, in the current time of persistent conflict, a chaplain’s likelihood of engaging in trauma ministry is greatly increased. It is time to examine the current POI and evaluate if 1.13 percent of the total training is adequate preparation for chaplains likely to

¹⁶⁵ Named for Dr. David A. Dunning after publication of various studies proving this phenomenon.
experience trauma ministry in combat and, as the Ft Hood shooting proves, may experience a traumatic event regardless of location.

The trauma ministry component of the Army CHBOLC POI is significant compared to that found in the United States Navy and Air Force. “The Navy’s Chaplain Basic Course provides no formal training in religious support to mass casualty incidents” and Air Force student chaplains only receive “familiarization training at their Basic Course”.

During this time of persistent conflict, our “Ongoing Overseas Contingency Operations,” formerly known as the “Global War on Terrorism,” are multi-national efforts. Allied countries have long learned from one another in order to improve their own training, tactics, and procedures as well as to increase efficiency when working together. Therefore, it is valuable to review the recruitment criteria and training offered among some of the United States closest allies.

4.2 Chaplain Qualification Standards of Selected Allied Nations

4.2.1 Australia

The Royal Australian Army Chaplain Department differs in recruiting standards and training requirements in multiple ways from those in the US Army Chaplain Corps. Key differences are the allowance of much older applicants and requiring a physical fitness test, in addition to a basic medical examination, prior to entry. There is also a much smaller pool of sending churches. The Australian published recruiting standards are found in Appendix C.

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166 Protecting, 45.
The additional apparent difference in the selection criteria is not as significant as it may seem. While in the United States the MDiv is required, the Bachelor of Theology (BTh) is the typical academic credential of Australian chaplains. However, the MDiv is a “first professional” master’s degree and, as such, does not have a supporting baccalaureate requirement. Therefore the US Army Chaplain with a three-year MDiv, but a bachelor’s degree in a non-associated subject, and the Australian Chaplain with the BTh that consists of three years of theological study likely have similar theological education. Requirements of ordination and ecclesial endorsement are effectively the same as is the standard of two years or more of vocational ministry experience. CPE is a source of training and experience but, as in the United States, it is not a requirement.

The chaplain-training course in Australia consists of two parts. The first is a six week “Specialist Officers Course” which is “designed to familiarize new officers to the Army”. The student chaplain then completes a four week “Chaplain Basic Course” at the Chaplain Academy. “The main emphasis of this course is on how the new chaplain will fit into a chaplaincy team at whatever area they are posted.” These two components combine to become ten weeks of initial training for Australian chaplains. The course therefore is slightly shorter than the course in the United States and does not include a specific trauma ministry component. It does not appear, from this information, that the current training for Australian chaplains has materials in the field of trauma ministry to which the US Army chaplaincy could avail itself.

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167 Greg Clarke, Chaplain Major, Royal Australian Army Chaplain Department, Response to Request for Information, 03 March 2011.
4.2.2 Britain

The Royal Army Chaplains’ Department differs in recruiting standards and training requirements in multiple ways from those in the US Army Chaplain Corps. Differences shared with Australia is the allowance of much older applicants and the selection of clergy from a smaller pool of sending churches. A key difference from both the US Army and Australian Army is that it is the sending church, not the Army, which determines the minimum educational standard. The published recruiting standards for chaplains serving the British Army are found in Appendix C.

Padre (Col) Grant Ashton from the chaplain training branch provided additional information on behalf of the Deputy Chaplain General. The New Entry Chaplains’ Training Course held at the Armed Forces' Chaplaincy Centre (AFCC), Amport, lasts a period of six weeks. During the six weeks, there “are 3 hours on Operational Stress Reaction taught by an Army Consultant Psychiatrist, 4 hours visiting the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, and a discrete 3 day module on the Reality of War.” There is also an introduction to “Trauma Risk Management as a way of informing their ministry in traumatic situations.” These various training areas are not chaplain specific and therefore not intended as a means of directly developing specific ministerial skills in the face of traumatic injury and death. Instead, the training course as designed intends “to train the whole chaplain for a whole ministry in the belief that his or her ministry to soldiers and their families before deployment is crucial to ministry on deployment. Ministry at times of trauma

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168 Grant Ashton, Chaplain Colonel, Royal Army Chaplains’ Department, ACG Ops & Trg – British Army, Response to Request for Information, 15 April 2011.
is the tiniest fraction of what we do.” Ashton has not received feedback from
deployed chaplains regarding the efficacy of this training.

The trauma ministry training supplied by the AFCC appears to be less than
that provided in the US Army Chaplain Basic Officer’s Leadership Course. While it
does supply traumatic event training, it appears to be exclusively from a clinical
rather than pastoral perspective.

4.2.3 Canada

Canadian Forces have similar recruiting requirements to the United States.
One key difference is the allowance of Roman Catholic deacons and licensed laity to
be chaplains. The other is that the chaplains can serve in any of the three elements
of Canadian Forces rather than receiving a commission to serve in a particular
branch. The Canadian published recruiting standards are found in Appendix C.

Once an applicant receives approval to enter the Canadian Forces as a
chaplain he or she will undergo initial training at the Canadian Forces Chaplain
School and Centre by attending a course with four components. “Basic Military
Officer Qualification - CHAPLAIN” (Basic military skills training) thirty-five
training days; “Chaplain - Basic Occupation Qualification” (Basic chaplain training)
twenty-two training days; “Intermediate Ethics” eleven training days; “Intermediate
Pastoral Counseling” twelve training days. Each of these training days are
structured upon eight periods of fifty minutes each.\textsuperscript{169} This provides the entry-level
chaplain a total of eighty days in the initial chaplain-training course. The training
length is comparable to the length of training for United States Army Chaplains.

\textsuperscript{169} David M. Greenwood, Lieutenant Commander the Reverend, Canadian Forces,
Response to Request for Information, 28 February 2011.
However, “There is not a lot here about trauma from combat but general trauma care.” Instead, “combat specific issues [are] raised during the Chaplains in Deployed Operations course.” This follow-on course includes “a four week Distance Learning self-study component and thirteen in-house residency training days”. The idea of a specialized course of study to prepare the chaplain for a combat deployment seems to be a good one. Obstacles exist hampering any effort to adapting this model for the US Army context. Once a chaplain leaves CHBOLC he or she is considered fully qualified and prepared for deployment. To create an additional course requiring completion prior to deployment places additional burden upon those responsible for assigning chaplains to units. It also creates a training burden on receiving units that must ensure their assigned chaplains have the requisite training as part of their combat readiness.

4.3 International Comparison

The training component related to traumatic event ministry provided by the US Army Chaplain Corps for its initial entry chaplains fares well when compared to our closest allies. Each Army evaluated has developed a course that reflects past experiences and perceived need within the respective chaplain departments. Because of the relative peace throughout the world spanning decades, there was little institutional knowledge of the need for quality trauma ministry until the recent wars in the Middle East. This, it appears, has created a truncated perception of need

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170 Greenwood.

171 Greenwood.
for trauma ministry training. Ashton summed up the prevailing feeling when he stated, “Ministry at times of trauma is the tiniest fraction of what we do”.

Those whose career experiences include little, or are devoid of, the need for trauma ministry have achieved the standing in each nation’s Army to direct training content and see little to no need to include a robust trauma ministry element. Simultaneously, chaplains with little time in the Army are currently serving where trauma ministry is a very real need. To dismiss the importance of developing competence in trauma ministry because it occupies a small portion of a chaplain’s total workload is a bit like dismissing a diamond as no more than a small rock. Much like the geological pressure that compacts carbon into diamonds making them into so much more than just small rocks, the enormous intensity of ministry during those crucial moments of trauma creates a value exponentially greater than the time involved would seem to indicate.

In response to this reality, the leadership of each Army’s chaplaincy should be actively engaging junior chaplains with the intent of refining the chaplain training courses to reflect true battlefield needs. The US Army has begun this process and has responded in two notable ways.

The US Army Medical Corps has long had a pastoral care training division, which provides a variety of professional short courses. One of those courses is the Combat/Emergency Medical Ministry Course. This course is two weeks in duration and has the chaplain student working actively in a trauma center approximately eleven hours. Additionally, throughout the two weeks the chaplain student will be on shift rotation that requires time in the trauma center. Trainers dedicate the other hours of the training days to the topics of Crisis Ministry, Spiritual Reflection, Grief and Loss Ministry, and making Spiritual Assessments. This course provides the
chaplain student opportunity to learn his or her ministerial response and methodology in a safe, directed setting while still experiencing the real-world traumatic injury and death events of shootings, stabbings, and industrial and vehicular accidents. \(^{172}\)

Chaplains who attended the Combat/Emergency Medical Ministry Course prior to deployment found that they were better prepared to provide suitable pastoral response to wounded personnel while in combat. While this course is still optional, its promotion and accessibility outside of the Medical Command has grown to benefit many Army chaplains. Many chaplains now considered this course is to be a “must have” prior to deployment.

Additionally, the Chief of Chaplains has published a memorandum of instruction detailing the “Implementation of the Chaplain Professional Reinforcement Training Initiative” which includes a ten-hour period of training on the topic of “Familiarize students with trauma ministry”. \(^{173}\) This requirement for additional training after the initial chaplain training is a significant improvement over the previous lack of training. The current limiting factor to this training is that, “The program will be executed at the local level”. \(^{174}\) This fact will create a variation of content and quality of training impeding the intent of having a uniform level of minimum competency in the field. Furthermore, this initiative is still in its infancy meaning that senior chaplains are currently doing the best they can to meet the

\(^{172}\) Combat/Emergency Medical Ministry Course schedule of training supplied by CH (COL) Gordon G. Groseclose, Army Medical Department Center and School, 12 April 2011.


\(^{174}\) Implementation, 9.
training intent without materials because they are still considered “To Be Determined”.

Unlike during the time of my own, and many others, initial chaplain training, Trauma Ministry is currently taught to initial entry chaplains. There are also additional training opportunities extant and in development. There is, however, much room for improvement. It is the intent of this body of research to identify specific factors that will bring that improvement.

In the remaining chapters I will review current writing in the field of trauma ministry, explore chaplain, commander, and soldier experiences in relation to traumatic injury and death in a combat zone, and evaluate the practical and theological implications of trauma ministry. With these tasks accomplished, it is my intent to identify needed aspects of training and resources to assist in the meeting of those needs. I will also look for opportunities for immediate and direct application of the research findings. The following questions, informed by the research, will provide ideas for the practical implication of the knowledge gained. How will I use the knowledge to improve my own ability to deal with trauma? How can I use this knowledge to assist my colleagues and, eventually, subordinate chaplains prepare for trauma ministry? What recommendations can be made directly to the US Army Chaplain Center and School, as well as the Medical Command pastoral education department, to improve their programs of instruction?

\[175\] *Implementation*, 10-11.
Chapter 5 – Experiences of Combat Trauma Ministry

The general should take thought for the burial of the dead, offering as a pretext for delay neither occasion nor time nor place nor fear, whether he happens to be victorious or defeated. Now this is both a holy act of reverence toward the dead and also a necessary example for the living. For if the dead are not buried, each soldier believes that no care will be taken of his own body, should he fall, observing what happens before his own eyes, and thereby judging of the future, feeling that he, likewise, if he should die, would fail burial, waxes indignant at the contemptuous neglect of burial.  

5.1 Variations in Chaplain Experiences

What the chaplain does for Soldiers wounded and killed in combat is of the highest importance. The reality is that Soldiers frequently have little interaction with chaplains, similar to their civilian counterparts’ typical lack of interaction with clergy, except when things are going wrong. When things are going well, a Soldier’s interest in matters of religion runs the gamut from being personally involved and devout in the practice of his or her faith, to neutral, to using matters of religion for negative personal reasons. John Crawford (Iraq 2002-2003) gives an example of this last position in his comments on calling out Merry Christmas and shouting information about Jesus to the Iraqi population. “It wasn’t that we had any interest in spreading Christianity to the masses, it was simply entertaining to annoy them.”  

This is in contrast to his comments on the actions of the command and the chaplain when his unit of assignment took casualties.

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That night we had a company meeting, where the battalion commander and the chaplain tried to speak words of encouragement to worried and angry soldiers. We were a team, they said. They told us to persevere and stay strong. Every soldier is important to the chain of command, and they were suffering right beside us. It was a good speech, but when the time came, neither the chaplain nor the battalion commander could remember the names of either of our soldiers who were hit.\(^\text{178}\)

The disappointment Crawford felt is obvious. Soldiers want to know they will be cared for and if the worst happens, they will be honored. When the command and the chaplain fail to remember a Soldier’s name it becomes evident in the Soldier’s mind that he will not be properly honored. It is telling that while Crawford mentioned the commander first when introducing the commander and the chaplain, he mentions the chaplain first when lamenting on their failure to remember the names of the Soldiers hit. A chaplain is supposed to care and it should show the most to those he serves.

SSG David Bellavia (Iraq, 2004-2005) had a very different experience with his chaplain. In his memoir about the Battle of Fallujah, Bellavia positively recalls his chaplain’s response to casualties. Chaplain Ric Brown cleaned the inside of a Bradley fighting vehicle of the remains of Soldier killed inside. “Chaplain Brown chose the most ghoulish task for himself, so that young men could focus on the difficult mission at hand. Ric Brown, the only semblance of decency in a city surrounded by misery.”\(^\text{179}\)

In *A Table in the Presence* Chaplain Carey H. Cash (Iraq, 2003 with the United States Marine Corps) gives his account as the chaplain to the Marines who

\(^{178}\) Crawford, 96-97.

were part of the initial push toward Baghdad. During this campaign, the unit of his assignment sustained the first combat death of Operation Iraqi Freedom (21 March 2003). Cash recalls hearing the radio call, “Casualty! Casualty! Two Marines down at Pumping Station 2. Request Chaplain.” In his description of his response, Cash explains that he spent a few hours talking with the Marines in order to “piece together the last hours of Lieutenant Shane Childers’ life”. When Cash arrived at the location of Childers’ death, the body had already been evacuated from the scene. Cash says, “there wasn’t much to say. And words were not what we needed right then.”

The difficulty with Cash’s description of the event is that he does not go into what was needed, if words were not, or what he did other than “piece together the last hours” of the deceased. Cash does not describe any form of direct ministry he performed during this time of trauma. Instead he claims to know the thoughts of those Marines present remarking, “God Himself was beginning to confirm in all of our hearts something we hadn’t really thought of before…It was not a story of death and tragedy, but of a sovereign God who, knowing the trials we will face, providentially prepares us to face them.”

Rather than describing any ministry done at this time of traumatic death Cash reflects on a sermon he delivered while still in the United States and preparing for the potential of deployment. “My sermon was brief, but considering the ominous state of the world and where we might find ourselves in the months to come, I

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181 Cash, 79.
182 Cash, 88.
183 Cash, 88-89.
thought it was fitting: Fear Not. …I wanted more than anything for the men to know that despite the fears that assailed us all, God would give us the bravery we needed to do whatever our country might call us to do.”

Although one cannot be certain what Cash did or did not do concerning immediate ministry, his lack of any recollection or description of specific ministry performed indicates he was practicing what chaplains in US Army call “ministry of presence”. Ministry of presence is, as the name implies, a matter of simply being with Soldiers. This methodology of ministry has both proponents and detractors. Proponents claim that a chaplain’s presence alone can be calming and comforting to Soldiers during their times of need. Detractors find the idea that chaplains bless Soldiers by their mere presence to be pure hubris. Chaplain Walsh, one of the severest detractors of ministry of presence, has repeatedly proclaimed, “Any chaplain who feels as if ministry of presence is enough should receive nothing more than ‘medicine of presence from a doctor’.” While Walsh obviously made this statement for effect, and he would never wish for anyone to go without proper medical care, his vociferous pronouncement, many times repeated, makes clear his priority of chaplains providing active intentional ministry.

Cash closes his comments about the casualty his battalion sustained by stating, “God had provided for these men everything they would need to sustain and strengthen them.” Then, in his only reference to a tangible act ministry performed says, “we observed a brief service of committal and entrusted the soul of our fallen

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184 Cash, 90.

Chaplain (LTC) Stephen Walsh while the Division Chaplain for the 1st Cavalry Division upon multiple occasions prior to, during, and post the deployment of the 1st Cavalry Division to Iraq, 2006-2008.

186 Cash, 94.
brother to the all-merciful hands of our Father in heaven” and, again apparently speaking to the thoughts and feelings of everyone, “we knew we were not alone”. It is impossible to know if the Marines felt as Cash claims they did. He writes his entire memoir from a very “Christian Triumphalism” perspective. It is possible that the Marines in his care did indeed feel as he says. It is just as possible, and maybe more likely, that they found him to be a “‘cheerleader’ whose every sermon sounded like a pitch from a…recruiter” rather than a minister.

Compare Chaplain Patrick McLaughlin’s recounting of ministry to wounded Soldiers to that of Cash.

In the midst of the hectic activity, I take a few moments to speak with these fine young men. I find out where they are from, reassure them that they are receiving outstanding medical care, tell them that we’re all proud of their bravery, offer to pray with them now, and promise to pray with them after they leave.

Without exception, each soldier welcomes the prayers and is put a little more at ease during this otherwise frightening day.

McLaughlin performed a ministry of presence but unlike the self-reported efforts of Cash, that presence was clearly intentional. Through it, McLaughlin performed valuable pastoral care and did his part in bringing a sense of the sacred to the space that the effects of combat had invaded. For a chaplain effectively to engage in a ministry of intentional presence, such as McLaughlin’s, sensitivity to Soldiers’ perception is critical. Engagement with the Soldiers is necessary but must be gauged and regulated by the Soldiers’ receptivity.

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187 Cash, 94.


There are, on occasion, commanders who dislike their chaplain. Some chaplains have commanders “who think all faith is silly or who views the particular religion of the chaplain as heresy”.\textsuperscript{190} This, however, is rare. Most commanders are supportive of, or at worst benign toward, their chaplain. One chaplain greatly respected by his commander is Ed Choi.

Choi was the battalion chaplain for the 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion of the 26\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Regiment “Blue Spaders” during their fifteen-month deployment to Iraq, 2006-2007. During that time, the 1-26 Infantry sustained the worst casualties of any US battalion since the Vietnam war. Over the fifteen months the 1-26 suffered 35 Soldiers Killed in Action and 122 additional wounded.\textsuperscript{191} Linda Robinson developed her book by interviewing commanders and key leaders among the Soldiers. The commander’s respect for Choi is blatant in the many references to him and the ministry he provided during a deployment filled with traumatic events. Choi is cited as providing comfort, while he himself was “wounded in the left knee and right foot,” to “the distraught” Soldiers of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} platoon after a catastrophic attack on a Bradley fighting vehicle which killed those inside.\textsuperscript{192} He is favorably remembered for his prayer with those suffering loss.\textsuperscript{193} Choi conducted memorial ceremonies “intended to help the unit begin to reach closure”.\textsuperscript{194} Gen Petraeus attended one of these ceremonies and remarked afterward on the difficulty of the 1-26 mission and the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{190} Mansfield, 81.
\textsuperscript{192} Robinson, 201.
\textsuperscript{193} Robinson, 203.
\textsuperscript{194} Robinson, 203.
\end{flushright}
“tough time” they were having. In the form of continuous care to his Soldiers, Choi ensured a regular worship schedule for those who practiced their faith and multiple innovations in the way of trauma stress control. Choi did both of these to help mitigate the chances that these Soldiers in his care would develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Choi’s command and Army leadership clearly recognized his self-sacrifice, dedication to the mission, concern for Soldiers, and initiative in developing methods of care to assist in the healing process for those both physically and emotionally traumatized. Choi was awarded the Purple Heart for the wounds sustained in combat, the Bronze Star Medal for his service, and was selected to attend the residential Command and General Staff College, which is a significant recognition of the leadership Choi has already displayed and is preparation for much greater levels of responsibility.

In these few examples, it is apparent that there are differing opinions as to what is expected of the chaplain in response to traumatic injury and death. That fact continued to be evident in the various questionnaires and interviews conducted with chaplains, officers, and Soldiers for this thesis. During the course of research, certain expected and appreciated acts of ministry overlapped between chaplains, officers, and Soldiers. In other areas there seems to be little continuity between the three. What follows is a series of reflections and observation from representatives of the three categories. The information will be assessed later for both training and theological implications.

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195 Robinson, 203.
196 Robinson, 211.
All personnel who have contributed their stories to this portion have combat experience and been directly or indirectly involved with traumatic injury or death in that combat setting.

5.2 Chaplain Experiences

One concern expressed almost universally by chaplains who provided information for this thesis is the lack of training provided by the Army in the realm of trauma ministry prior to deployment. This is indicative of my own experience. I received one block of instruction on hospital ministry and truly, that does not compare to what was needed. Chaplain Thomas Miller gets to the heart of the matter commenting on the lack of training, “there was none but no one planned on going to war for real”. Training, which many chaplains will comment on, was inadequate or non-existent because there was no expectation of war. Furthermore, even if there was, until the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began there was nobody training chaplains that had actually seen a Soldier die in combat. There was no collective, institutional memory left from previous conflicts and those instructors who attempted to teach the subject were not experts in the field. This resulted in a chaplain corps lacking any established standards of action when called upon to minister to casualties. The result was a mix of chaplain responses and actions. The following give example of what a few chaplains did in the absence of official guidance.

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197 Chaplain Thomas Miller, interview 14 October 2010.

198 Chaplain Mark Tanner, conversation 02 October 2010.
5.2.1 “Chaplain Thomas Miller” 199

Chaplain Thomas Miller has served the Army as a chaplain since 1993. His combat experience includes two deployments during which he served a variety of Soldiers at battalion and brigade assignments. As stated earlier, his initial chaplain training did not include any material on performing trauma ministry. Miller attended a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) residency from 1998 to 99, which contained a significant trauma component. 200

Although CPE is a civilian managed and accredited program, the US Army has four CPE training centers at different military posts around the country. Each year the Army selects twenty chaplains to attend a year-long CPE residency resulting in the completion of four “units” of CPE, two basic and two advanced. This training is significant for the twenty selected to attend. However, those twenty each year represent a minute fraction of the approximately fourteen-hundred chaplains serving in the Regular Army at any one time.

Miller is “convinced that CPE is the best possible training for any chaplain that must go down range and deal with combat and trauma of any kind.” CPE, by design, does not require a trauma component but the four CPE training centers the US Army maintains all include access to a trauma center. When asked if any CPE would do or should the trauma center portion be mandated, Miller qualified his answer saying that the “trauma center piece is critical”. Miller feels so strongly about the value of CPE he believes at least one unit should be a prerequisite for all chaplains prior to their receiving endorsement.

199 Miller.

200 For information on the structure and content of CPE see the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education website: www.acpe.edu
Megory Anderson, author of a valuable book on ministry to the dying, explains the importance of rituals to the dying as a way of emotionally putting “affairs in order”. She details that actions the clergy should be ready to provide the dying person such as:

- Rites of anointing
- Prayers of healing
- Confession / reconciliation
- Purification rituals (e.g., baptism)
- Communion

According to Anderson these rituals help a person come to reconciliation with their mortality. Chaplain Capodanno lived out these priorities of ministry during his time as a chaplain in Vietnam. The most frequently performed ministry by him “in Vietnam were Confession, or the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the Anointing of the Sick, at that time known as Extreme Unction….Confession was a great consolation…[and] for those who were seriously wounded or dying, the Anointing of the Sick united them more closely to the suffering and death of the Lord…building them up in faith and the hope of the resurrection.”

Miller would certainly agree with Anderson and in many ways was similar to Capodanno. Miller related that one of the “most effective ministries [he] provided was covering the MEDEVAC (medical evacuation) flights”. Miller would fly with the medics to the location where wounded Soldiers were. Upon arrival, Miller would assist the combat medics to “bring out the wounded and dead”.

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202 Anderson, 48.

203 Anderson, 47.

These first moments of the MEDEVAC are critical. Wounded Soldiers need to get on the helicopter and to the combat support hospital as fast as possible. The survival rate of those evacuated is extremely high, nearly 100 percent, but that survival rate relies on the evacuation of the wounded within the critical “golden” minutes after the injury.

With the evacuation underway, Miller used the opportunity “to talk to the wounded and dying”. It was not empty chatter or an attempt “to reconstruct” what happened. Rather, Miller engaged in meaningful acts of intentional ministry. “I would pray with them, baptize them, sing to them, read Scriptures, but most importantly I would hold them.”

Miller experienced a significant difference of opinion from his command as to where his priorities should be. As to their understanding of the chaplain’s responsibility Miller remarks, “I do not believe the command had a clue.” Instead, his command “saw the chaplain as a tool” they could use for tactical advantage. Rather than prioritize his place in providing ministry to the Soldiers of the command, Miller and other chaplains, in disregard to their non-combatant status, “were used to gather intelligence from churches, mosques, schools and clinics”. When Miller refused, his career was threatened.

Miller’s Soldiers gave a different response. They wanted him to be there and would show it rather than say it. In response to his effort to know them and establish relationships with them, the Soldiers trusted him. They did not talk about what he did, but when a Soldier needed help, they brought the Soldier to Miller. One of the greatest tangible signs of their respect for Miller was taking care of him. Just as he made sure they got what they needed when coming into his realm, they
made sure he was cared for in theirs. They made “sure that I had everything that I needed. When I went outside the wire they made sure I was always safe.”

During Miller’s combat deployments, he found “journaling and poetry to be key” in self-care. He desired little in the way of pastoral care. He wished he were pulled out of the Area of Operation (AO) for an occasional day of recuperation, for a senior chaplain to spend some time with him, and the simple luxury of a shower and hot meal. Instead, his supervisory chaplain visited him four times over the course of a year. While deployed, Miller received no pastoral care or emotional support from any other sources.

Miller was himself a supervisory chaplain by the time of his second deployment and lessons learned from the first are evident. Prior to deploying, he encouraged and provided opportunity for the chaplains in his charge to attend the Combat /Emergency Medical Ministry Course at the United States Army Academy of Health Sciences (Army Medical Department Center and School), Fort Sam Houston, Texas. During the deployment, he “visited them every week and did the Defusing for them after traumatic events”. As a supervisor, Miller demonstrated great pastoral care for the chaplains in his charge. Unfortunately, his abilities were not gained through chaplain training channels but rather, in response to the inadequate care he received.

5.2.2 “Chaplain John Brown”

Chaplain John Brown has served as a US Army chaplain since 2006 and deployed to Iraq once. His deployment lasted nearly fifteen months and occurred during the “surge”. While deployed, Brown served as the battalion chaplain to an

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205 CH John Brown, interview 06 January 2011.
Armor battalion. In Brown’s initial chaplain training, he received a briefing as to how to triage casualties and some minimal role-play during Situational Training Exercises (STX). Brown rates that training to be of value within its limitations. While little more than an “orientation” Brown remarks, “That training did serve me well.” He valued the fact that through it he “learned how to set priorities of ministry in a combat scenario, especially in a MASCAL situation”. In regards to the training’s brevity and limitations Brown remarked with resignation, that it was good in light of the conditions “but really, how do you train someone for what they will see in war?” Brown received no other training regarding trauma or ministry in combat prior to deployment.

As detailed earlier, Brown had great fear of what his own reaction would be when responding to a traumatic injury. Instead, he found that “it seemed like I flipped a switch and became task-focused”. This did not mean there was no apprehension, he “still got knots in [his] stomach every time [he] had to go to the Aid Station” but he remained in control and provided ministry to the wounded and those providing medical care.

Chaplain James Hutchens served as a chaplain during the war in Vietnam. He eventually retired from the Army having achieved the rank of Brigadier General and filling the position of Assistant Chief of Chaplains for the Army Reserve. His units of assignment were the 173rd Airborne Brigade “Sky Soldiers” and the United States Army Special Forces “Green Berets”. Hutchens emphasizes the importance of being present and praying with wounded Soldiers. In his book, Hutchens writes of crawling from wounded Soldier to wounded Soldier speaking words of comfort to them and praying for them, and sharing with them his own confidence in Jesus as
Saviour. In a recent conversation, Hutchens confirmed that it is still his conviction that a chaplain’s greatest ministry to a Soldier wounded in combat is to get right next to him and pray with him. “If he is conscious pray with him, if unconscious grab his hand, put your mouth next to his ear, and pray for him.”

The Army did not train Brown to do that type of trauma ministry but it is what he did. He would “talk with the conscious in a way to provide them comfort”. He would talk with the wounded “about fears, pain, and the road to recovery. Usually, [he] would offer to pray with them and usually, they would accept”. For those that were unconscious Brown “would talk in their ear a little bit to let them know that they were loved. [He] would then pray with them. If Christian, [he] would pray according to the dictates of [his] faith. If of another faith, [he] would pray in more general terms to [Brown’s] God.”

Brown’s ministry began with the wounded but did not end there. After he was finished with those killed or wounded in action, he would spend time with the Soldiers who were friends of the casualties. “Some wanted to be alone. Others wanted to talk, cry, whatever. Some wanted to curse, kick, stomp and kill. I pretty much just let them process their reactions to the event in whatever way they wanted, as long as it didn’t hurt them or someone else.” After having their needs met they began to disperse, Brown would spend time with the medical personnel. Again, he would provide words of comfort and for the caregivers, words of appreciation for all they did. Brown would end his ministry after a traumatic event inviting those present to join him in a prayer committing the Soldiers and the medical personnel’s service to God.

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207 James M. Hutchens, conversation unknown day July 2010.
Recognizing that the Army did not train him to do this, Brown remarks, “I’m not sure I learned exactly how to do this. Maybe I saw it and copied it, or maybe it was intuitive. I don’t know. But if I had it to do over again, I would still use this model of ministry.”

Brown had a significantly different experience than Miller regarding command expectations. Although they did not articulate it to him, Brown knows that “they wanted [him] present, actively involved, competent and comfortable in providing comfort and care for the wounded and dying”. In one event retold by Brown members of his command joined him behind the curtain that segregated the dead from the wounded and joined him in his prayers for the Soldier, his family, and friends. Then they, working together, zipped closed the Soldier’s remains pouch and placed him on a truck for transportation to mortuary affairs.

Brown also enjoyed good rapport with his Soldiers. As in Miller’s experience, this was not expressed in words but evidenced in relationship. “One time I asked my father who his best friend was. He identified an old army buddy he’d hardly spoken to in thirty years. “Men who have competed together, sweat together, bled together, and overcome adversity together are bonded for life,” Brown confirms this in his experience. As he was there “to be there to help comfort them and help them connect with God in the midst of their pain and loss… we shared a deeper bond and were able to talk about the more meaningful things of life. I earned their trust, as they knew that I would be there for them too.”

Self-care was an issue for Brown and he admits that he should have been “more aware of [his] own needs”. Part of this lack of self-care came from a

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208 David Murrow, Why Men Hate Going to Church (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 224.
reluctance to burden another chaplain stating, “they had their own pain to deal with. I did not want to add to it.” Reading and watching movies for a moment of escape ended up being a surrogate for interaction with others. While Brown read “a lot” he found “that the longer [he] was there, the more difficult it became to pray and read scriptures”. He found a major exception to his reluctance to talk with others in “a couple of good friends”. With those friends, he would talk about life and theology. For Brown these talks were “as life-giving as water in the desert”.

Brown says he received no pastoral care, “Zero! None!” from his supervisory chaplain. He wanted “A spiritual father and not [someone more concerned with being a proper] Army officer. Genuine care, compassion, and comfort with no regard for rank or position. A fatherly figure to advise and guide through the intensity of that ministry environment.”

5.2.3 “Chaplain Walter Stevens”209

Chaplain Walter Stevens has served as a US Army chaplain since 1989. During his time as a chaplain, he has deployed five times beginning with the Panama Invasion of 1989 and each conflict since to the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has had assignments with special operations and conventional forces. Stevens states that all of his training in the field of trauma ministry came in the form of on-the-job training. Like Miller, Stevens entered the Army during a time of peace (the few combat operations that occurred, including his own Panama experience, were very short and involved a limited number of Soldiers) resulting in an Army and a Chaplain Corps concerned with garrison operations. “The chaplaincy never provided any training in this area because its focus during [his]

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209 Chaplain Walter Stevens, interview 14 December 2010.
time was on the chaplain as an administrator.” Prior to his entering the Army, Stevens spent three years as a fire department chaplain and credits that experience with training him in what to do during times of trauma.

Stevens observed that during times of trauma, “Medical folks and troops like the chaplain to be present, yet rarely is there time or room to provide sacramental ministry to the victim.” Stevens clearly prioritized intentional and tangible ministry. His actions with the wounded included touch, anointing, and prayers. He described his method of prayer as “visually praying” for both the wounded and the caregivers so they knew he was not just standing around but calling upon God’s help in the situation. Stevens also assisted whatever way he could physically, lifting stretchers, loading wounded in helicopters, holding IV bags, and more. As to things, he would have done differently, Stevens wishes he had “carried more crosses and medals to send with the victim and to give responders” and that he had spent more time in “team prayer after the event”.

This reflects the prevalent desire Soldiers have for something tangible to represent God in their lives. From rosaries and crosses added to dog tags, to prayer cards, and even personal bottles of Holy Water, almost every Soldier has something on his person representing faith in God. Oddly enough, this is almost just as true of those without any personal faith as it is of those who proclaim a faith. Soldiers’ use of Christian imagery is not unique to Americans nor is it a new development in the life of Soldiers. Constantine fought under the sign of the cross after seeing his vision and hearing the words “in hoc signo vinces”. The crusaders fought in armor emblazoned with crosses and some carried fragments of the “True Cross” with them in battle. Henry V attended the Mass three times, took communion, and

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210 In this sign you will conquer.
made the sign of the cross with his men prior to his leading them in the Battle of Agincourt.\footnote{Preston Jones and Cody Beckman, \textit{God’s Hiddenness in Combat: Toward Christian Reflection on Battle} (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009), 14.} Joan of Arc had two banners made for carrying into battle. The first included the image of Jesus sitting in judgment and the second, which was carried by the priest accompanying her troops, displayed the crucified Christ.\footnote{Regine Pernoud and Marie-Veronique Clin trans. Jeremy Duquesnay Adams, \textit{Joan of Arc: Her Story} (New York, NY: St Martin’s Press, 1998), 36-37.}

These historical examples are not presented as indicative of proper Christian behavior or an appropriate use of Christian imagery. Much has done throughout history in the name of Christ and in the sign of the Cross that does not reflect the person of Jesus as “Prince of Peace”. Rather, they are given to demonstrate that throughout the ages Soldiers have desired a way of tangibly connecting to God. Furthermore, that desire continues today. The militaries of the world still co-opt religious imagery for official purposes while Soldiers continue to cling to various items of faith for their own purposes, some righteous some talismanic. The chaplain’s challenge in light of this reality is to discern how to provide for Soldiers’ needs without propagating a “crusader” mentality or Soldier superstition.

Today, at Fort Hood, Texas (and many other major military installations) deploying Soldiers file past tables loaded with crosses, prayer beads, and Christian literature on their way to the planes that will fly them into combat zones. Nearly every Soldier takes something to carry while deployed.\footnote{At Fort Hood these tables are manned by the PrayFAST (Pray For A Soldier Today) Team lead by COL (Retired) David Gifford.} While these are overt examples, militaries around the world have also made use of the cross to validate the righteousness of their missions and the service of their Soldiers. The Distinguished
Service Cross, the Victoria Cross, and the Croix de Guerre are but a few examples.

*Stevens* command expected him “to not be afraid to be there”. In his assessment, their interest was limited to his being there and beyond that, “they had no further interest”. His actions exceeded their minimal expectations but, in his estimation, went “unnoticed”.

As to Soldier expectations, *Stevens* comments they want you “to visibly pray, touch them, and do things that looked ‘chaplainy.”’ He has a hard time assessing Soldier response to his ministry related to trauma. “I never saw most soldiers that I ministered to again as they were taken out of theater. And many of them never saw me at the time of crisis because they were unconscious.”

*Stevens* is rather guarded in answering what he did in means of self-care. Instead, he gives a pre-emptive answer. “I have long viewed crisis ministry in the same way that a heart surgeon views a heart transplant – with a certain clinical acceptance that blood, guts and occasional loss are all part of the calling. Otherwise, you need to find another calling.” When asked about any pastoral care he received from supervisory chaplains he simply laughed.

*Stevens* was in supervisory chaplain positions during his more recent deployments. In that role, he stressed chaplain and chaplain’s assistant preparation. One recommended way of preparation suggested is that they ride with a city fire department for at least three weeks. Within the Army training system, he, like *Miller*, encouraged and supported his chaplains and chaplain assistants attending the Combat/Emergency Medical Ministry Course at Fort Sam Houston as well as Critical Incident Stress training. During his deployment, he cared for the chaplains

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214 Jones, 15.
in his command in the way he wished someone had cared for him. “I visited with them, asked them to retell their story and tried to forget my rank and religious bias to be a leader that men and women could look up to at the darkest moment of their lives.” Again, like Miller, Stevens learned what to do not through training but by doing what previous supervisors failed to do for him.

In total, I spoke with sixteen chaplains who gave significant answers to my questions sharing their experiences in combat. Twelve claimed they had received no training in relation to trauma ministry during their time in the chaplain school. Three remarked that they had received training but it was very limited in scope and was only marginally adequate for the task. This leaves one who feels his training was of the quality he needed to begin preparing for effective ministry in combat. When asked about the care provided to them by senior chaplains, ten claimed to have received none or worse, three explained that they found what the chaplain did do was actually detrimental. Four felt that the support given was adequate. Two expressed the highest praise for the pastoral care received from their senior chaplains. These numbers make clear the need for improvement within training at the entry and supervisory level of the Chaplain Corps.

5.3 Officer and Commander Experiences

General of Army, William T. Sherman, remarked in his memoirs that, “There should be no real neglect of the dead, because it has a bad effect on the living; for each soldier values himself as highly as though he were living in a good house at home.” With little exception, Officers and Commanders, regardless of

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their faith or lack thereof, want a chaplain as part of their team. The reason: good chaplains take care of Soldiers and commanders want their Soldiers taken care of. Challenges come into play when there is a difference of expectation between the chaplain and the commander, as in Miller’s experience, and when the chaplain is, in the view of the command, not taking care of the Soldiers. I found the officers I approached for this research to be very willing to participate and interested in the subject matter. In all, eighteen officers holding various levels of command authority provided significant input for this chapter. Of this total, three provided feedback that their chaplains exceeded expectation and set new standards. Five discussed chaplains that failed to perform up to standard and even had to be removed from situations they were causing to get worse. The remainder felt as if their chaplains met expectations but without significant remark. The following examples detail how chaplains have met, exceeded, and failed to meet the expectations of the officers and commanders they supported.

5.3.1 “Lieutenant General Oscar Jefferson”

LTG Oscar Jefferson, United States Marine Corps (retired), combat tours include two during the war in Vietnam and one to Iraq in 2004. Jefferson’s units of assignment took casualties during all three deployments where he was able to observe the chaplains’ responses. Jefferson did not recall any formal briefing or training to instruct him on the nature or scope of a chaplain’s duties in a combat environment.

Jefferson expected his chaplains to meet what he considers “the role of a chaplain”. He makes clear, “as a chaplain you are not expected to be warriors on the

\[216\] LTG Oscar Jefferson, interview 14 October 2010.
battlefield of war... You are expected, however, to display courage and leadership in both combat and in the battle for morality.” And, he expects the chaplain to “provide spiritual support and comfort to the sick, wounded and grieving of the unit”.

During his combat deployments, Jefferson had chaplains which met these expectations and one that did not. During his first combat deployment (Vietnam, 1965), Jefferson’s chaplain “had a personal breakdown during the triage of the injured and dead and was medically evacuated for treatment of his psychological problems manifested by his reaction to the trauma”. The chaplain who replaced the first met expectations and the chaplains with whom Jefferson served during his other combat tours met expectations. These chaplains “ministered with words of comfort, prayer, memorial services, and individual and group pastoral sessions”.

In the realm of pastoral care that Jefferson personally received, the chaplain also met expectations. From the times of trauma and receiving “words of comfort at the memorials” to ongoing care in the form of “Bible study, prayer, foxhole visits, [and] friendship,” Jefferson feels his chaplains over the years and through the wars provided him quality spiritual care.

Jefferson has significant advice to chaplains as to what they should do and who they should be as chaplains. He detailed five specific traits that commanders look for in their chaplains. First, “a chaplain should be a moral leader who sets the example through personal conduct.” He expects the chaplain not only to speak his or her convictions but act on them. Jefferson’s exhortation that “mere words are not enough” echoes James, “Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show
you my faith by my works… For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.”

Jefferson’s next point is that a chaplain “should be omnipresent with his flock”. He emphasized the need to get out of the office and be where the people are. Jefferson described a need for incarnational ministry as he asserted chaplains must be a “personal witness to the troops at their time and place. It means missionary outreach because those who need you most may not have the courage to come to you!” Chaplain Jonathan Ball of the Queen’s Dragoon Guards shares this priority of ministry. He writes, “There is a lot of empty talk about ministry being Christian clergy ‘getting alongside’ people, as if somehow all the Incarnation was about was God becoming human and doing nothing else… we as priests and ministers have to do more than simply ‘be’, and like Christ have to offer ourselves for the sake of others.”

Jefferson’s third standard for chaplains is that they must be “a wise and trusted counselor and advisor” for every member of the unit to which he is assigned. This emphasis on a trusted counselor was a recurring theme among nearly every officer involved in the research for this thesis. Interestingly, a few emphasized this point and then went on to remark that to achieve that level of connection with members of the command is difficult due to significant rank inequity between themselves and their chaplains.

Jefferson expects chaplains to be “relevant” and “spirit-filled” preachers. He expects that chaplains will faithfully preach “the word of the Lord” and makes clear

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217 James 2:18b, 26

that it is those listening, the members of the unit, that will measure the relevance of
the sermon. Sermons must be prepared with them, and their situation, in mind and
speak to them. Chaplain (LTC) John D. Laing, PhD confirms this standard stating
that Christian chaplains must, “Preach the Word! Know the Word! Understand the
Word! Live the Word!”²¹⁹

Finally, Jefferson believes that “a chaplain must provide a Christ-like
presence, and be able to offer encouragement and spiritual comfort to the hurting in
his flock”. He urges chaplains to remember when troops come for counseling,
“They are in need of understanding and forgiveness. They have fears and need
encouragement. They want to be reassured of what is right and what is wrong. Not
only can you encourage them and reinforce personal values, you can also build a
sense of community in your unit, which provides encouragement, and support
among peers.”

5.3.2 “Lieutenant Colonel David Shane”²²⁰

LTC David Shane has deployed eight times during the current war in Iraq
and Afghanistan. Seven deployments were to Afghanistan and one to Iraq. During
those deployments, Shane knew his chaplains and observed their ministry during
times of traumatic injury and death. Shane reports that he received absolutely no
training or any briefing as to what a chaplain’s role and duties during times of
combat.

²¹⁹ John D. Laing, In Jesus Name: Evangelicals and Military Chaplaincy (Eugene, OR: Wipf
and Stock, 2010), 292.

²²⁰ LTC David Shane, interview 14 October 2010.
Prior to deployment *Shane* expected his chaplains “to be well trained at the task though not necessarily exercised in the task”; just as any other Soldier must be trained in the tasks they are to perform. *Shane* detailed the rest of his tangible expectations: “I expected the Chaplain to be well composed and the rock in times of emotional distress. I expected the Chaplain to be at the epicenter of the event in order to minister to the maximum number of people and to be absolutely selfless in his services provided. There needed to be a feedback mechanism to the boss, and there needed to be follow up with those Soldiers who needed it.” These are clearly identified, measurable standards of performance; the chaplain meets these standards or he does not. Further *Shane* expects that his chaplain will “connect” with the Soldiers, “earn their respect” and, in doing so, gain their confidence.

During his combat deployments, *Shane* had chaplains who exceeded his expectations and others who “grossly failed to meet [his] expectations”. Chaplains who met *Shane’s* expectations ministered immediately to the platoon and company level Soldiers who knew the Killed-in-Action Soldier the best. He became personally involved and used the Soldier’s first name. He spent time with those grieving, learned about the Soldier and recounted stories to personalize his message during the Memorial Ceremony. He went back to the Soldiers one and two weeks later to continue providing pastoral care. *Shane* makes clear that the chaplain who can do these things must have connected with the Soldiers and earned their respect. Those connections come from “casual interaction” and “shared hardships”. “It doesn’t come from sitting in your office waiting for the next guy to show up for
marital counseling.” Ultimately, Shane says, “When a casualty occurs, the chaplain needs to be the rock.”

Shane reports that even those chaplains that met his expectations did not provide significant pastoral care to him. He would have appreciated some simple forms of care. “‘Cup of coffee’ or ‘chow’ counseling would have sufficed. Just come in the office or go out on a mission with me (or other senior leaders) to casually interact. If there are issues, they will come out as we interact or as I develop a level of comfort and confidence in my relationship with the chaplain.”

Shane’s advice to chaplains preparing for combat ministry is reminiscent of Paul’s message to the Corinthians that he had become all things to all people, that by all means some might be saved. Shane wants chaplains to add ministry tools to their toolbox. “The Chaplain needs a full toolbox to select from. The Chaplains I’ve observed in the conventional force are ‘one trick ponies’. Whatever ‘tools’ they were taught at school is often all they try to use to fix everyone… I just haven’t seen the Chaplains with anything more than a ‘¼ inch socket’ in their toolbox.”

5.3.3 “Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Allen”

LTC Allen has deployed to Iraq for one fifteen month deployment. Allen’s unit of assignment took casualties during the deployment and he was on hand to personally observe his chaplain’s action during these events of traumatic injury and

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221 Notice the repeated use of “rock”. This term was also used by LTC Allen when writing to his chaplain (see introduction). Another term used by leadership was “anvil”. It is clear from the strong metaphors that officers/commanders want chaplains capable of withstanding the intense pressure of trauma in combat. Likewise, the chaplain must be able to take a beating and still be fully capable of performing ministry.

222 1 Cor 9:22

223 LTC Stephen Allen, interview 21 October 2010.
death. *Allen* did not recall receive any form of training on a chaplain’s role and duties during combat but had developed expectations based on experience in previous combat arms assignments.

*Allen* “expected the Chaplain to meet the spiritual needs, or at least to attempt to meet those needs, of all Soldiers affected by the traumatic situation, provide follow-up counseling, as requested (or directed by the commander), and lead by example in his manner of performance and personal actions during the stress of combat.” Again, like *Shane* and *Jefferson*, clear expectations are given. This is an important fact to recognize. Much of what falls under the heading “ministry” is by its nature non-tangible and without effective unit of measurement. However, this does not change what is clear from these three and the other officers. Each had a list of standards. There is a distinct expectation for chaplains actively to engage the work they are doing in the lives of the Soldiers they are serving.

*Allen’s* chaplain “exceeded [his] expectations”. In the performance of his duties *Allen’s* chaplain “counseled, visited in Riva Ridge Aid Station & Combat Support Hospital, led memorial services, [and] prayed over the wounded”. One specific event stands out above all others in *Allen’s* memory. In May of 2007, a deep buried IED catastrophically destroyed an armored vehicle killing the of the Soldiers and one contracted interpreter inside. This was the single highest casualty-causing event of their fifteen-month deployment. *Allen’s* chaplain “assisted in identification of the remains”. After the medical personnel completed the official declaring of time of death and recording it in the records he “administered last rites” to the fallen.

*Allen* states that he did not receive pastoral care from his chaplain but clarifies that this was not a shortfall on his chaplain’s part. Rather, “I just
approached the relationship from a purely professional perspective and sought spiritual support/care from outside the battalion.”

In form of training guidance to chaplains preparing for deployment, Allen advises that he “spend time with a chaplain who has deployed and suffered loss in combat”. It is important to note the experience qualification for a chaplain’s potential mentor. In the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is very possible for a battalion to complete a full tour without sustaining any casualties. However, when casualties do occur they are likely to be severe and the chaplain must be adequately prepared. Lacking a chaplain with combat casualty experience Allen suggests seeking “out a police, fire, or hospital chaplain who has had to deal with tragic loss and its aftermath”. This advice nests well with that of Chaplain Stevens, given earlier, that a new chaplain ride along with fire department chaplains to gain hands on experience. This prioritization of availing oneself to an experienced mentor fits well in the Christian tradition with biblical examples such as Elijah and Elisha and Jesus with His disciples, and continues today with the emphasis for spiritual development through mentorship.²²⁴ With the importance of mentorship recognized in such pastoral tasks as preaching and teaching, by natural extension it must also apply to the critical task of trauma ministry.

Of the eighteen officers contributing to this research, fifteen claimed to have received no training or any type of briefing identifying a chaplain’s purpose and duties in a combat environment. Each of the three remaining stated they had received short briefings, which included the subject. There was complete agreement that the chaplain should “know,” “take care of,” and “be with” the Soldiers. It is

troubling that on such an important matter the Army seems to have no standardization of training. It is quite telling, however, that in the absence of any specific guidance Army officers have near identical responses as to what they expect the chaplain to do. For a chaplain to meet the expectations of his or her command, he must be as comfortable with his or her own ministerial identity as are those he serves. “Reach out to the line units; get to know the guys going out on patrol every day. When a platoon loses a Soldier, visit the guys, don’t be timid.”

Memorial Ceremonies were consistently mentioned as a way of providing care to the grieving. Commanders praised the Memorial Ceremony event as well a chaplain’s method of preparation for the ceremony. Those chaplains who sought out the grieving and heard their stories not only gained material with which to personalize their messages, they helped initiate the healing process for those who took the opportunity to share. Memorial Ceremonies, however, can be a point of contention.

A memorial ceremony is a command program with a ceremonial orientation. As a command program, attendance of soldiers at a memorial ceremony may be made mandatory. Although there may be religious aspects to the ceremony, such as scripture reading and prayer, the major focus will be on military tributes and honors.

The Memorial Ceremony is not a religious event but has a religious feel. This fact brought my own complaint that, “the chaplain only has five minutes to say something which is nearly devoid of theological content”. In accordance with the

225 CPT Clark Grant, interview 02 October 2010.


Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) in effect at the time, a reading of scripture and prayer were allowed, but the chaplain’s remarks were limited to five minutes and his or her remarks were to be a “brief tribute to the life of the soldier”. Chaplain Laing explores the issue of “Ceremonial Deism” at length in the chapter “Nurture the Living, Care for the Wounded, and Honor the Dead”. Laing carefully weighs the theological compromises made against the benefits gained by being involved in a Memorial Ceremony. Ultimately, Laing is in favor of chaplain involvement in Memorial Ceremonies. Simultaneously, he accurately describes and acknowledges the argument made by many chaplains against their design.

The officers interviewed were near unanimous in their recommendation to “get exposure” in preparation for a combat deployment. Working in a trauma center, with a fire or police department, and with emergency medical services, were each listed as means of gaining exposure. “Spend time with the police and especially a trauma unit … to see the trauma and carnage.” Also suggested was, using vignettes to train for trauma ministry. “Have chaplains review vignettes and talk about what their actions should be following. Focus on where the chaplain should be and whom he should seek out in these situations.” Through the careful examination of actual documented events, the student has the opportunity to learn from what a previous chaplain did and begin to form ideas regarding how he or she will react when faced with similar circumstances.

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229 Laing, 113-156.

230 CPT Daniel Williams, interview 20 October 2010.

231 LTC Charles Randall, interview 02 October 2010.
Of the officers interviewed, three were medical officers. Their contribution gives insight as to expectations of the chaplain while the wounded receive care. The common theme between the three is that “the chaplain is an integral part of the trauma team”.\textsuperscript{232}

5.3.4 “Colonel Norris Jacobs”\textsuperscript{233}

COL Jacobs has deployed twice during the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan. During each deployment, he served in a Combat Support Hospital. During both deployments, he worked closely with the chaplain and observed his ministry providing care to the wounded. Jacobs’ experiences with chaplains demonstrated the wide disparity that exists in the absence of standardized chaplain training in this field.

Jacobs’ first chaplain “was a God-send” and “critical to the command”. His positive influence came from his engagement at all levels, and accurate assessments of the condition of hospital staff members. This competence earned him the trust of the command and their reliance on him enabled better care for staff and Soldiers in need.

Jacobs’ second chaplain “was absolutely miserable” and “actually detrimental to the mission”. Ultimately, through his own negative attitude and “pathology,” this chaplain was degrading patient care. The damage he caused among staff, which would “need repair,” eventually caused Jacobs to seek this chaplain’s banishment from the hospital.

\textsuperscript{232} LTC Alan Peters, interview 27 September 2010.

\textsuperscript{233} COL Norris Jacobs, interview 01 November 2010.
5.3.5 “Lieutenant Colonel Alan Peters”

LTC Alan Peters has deployed three times beginning with Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1990-91 through his most recent deployment to Iraq, 2005-2006. During each of his three deployments, Peters served in Combat Support Hospitals. Peters, like Jacobs, witnessed both good and bad performance from chaplains.

“The [good] chaplain had free rein before, during and after traumas. If the patient needed a chaplain then the chaplain was there working among us.” This chaplain was a valued member of the team who seamlessly “worked in and around us during the traumas. He was at the head of the bed talking and praying with our sickest patients. He knew how to move in and out of the chaos of the trauma. Never do I recall him being in the way. He assisted with care. I don’t know what we would have done without him… I think his presence was invaluable for the patients as well as the staff.” Furthermore, he cared for those who cared about the wounded. “He would speak with the Soldiers from the units with wounded comrades and minister to them as well as communicate with the unit chaplains to keep them apprised of what was happening to their soldiers…Our chaplain was priceless.”

In contrast, Peters experienced one chaplain who failed to demonstrate any pastoral care. When speaking to a young officer who just lost a Soldier, this “chaplain came up and right in the middle of the lobby starting lecturing this officer that he needed to toughen up and quit crying”. The chaplain was instructed to leave and he “never returned to partake in any of the traumas”.

Every interview confirmed that officers, whether of line Soldiers out on patrol or medical personnel who care for those Soldiers when casualties occur during those patrols, expect the chaplain to be there. In the minds of Army officers,
the chaplain has to be able to perform valued ministry to Soldiers in order to be a valued member of the team.

5.4 Soldier and Non-Commissioned Officer Experiences

The importance of pastoral care to Soldiers cannot be overemphasized. “To a soldier who has little faith or understanding of the job of a priest, knowing his dead comrades are being treated with care and dignity means a lot.” While the typical minister’s manual or book of worship is devoid of guidance for traumatic death, there are certainly guiding principles. Actions upon notification of death such as, “the minister should go immediately” and a “few quiet words, a Scripture verse, and a brief prayer” are still sound. During the Vietnam War, Soldiers (1000 surveyed – 598 returned responses, complete survey data found in He Was Always There) ranked visitation to the sick and wounded as the second most important function of a chaplain in combat. The most important function of a chaplain was to be with them in their various hardships. Although only a sample of thirteen for this research, the same priorities seem to hold in the minds of Soldiers who have fought in the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. When speaking of their expectations of a chaplain in combat, there was a distinct consensus. Soldiers expect “the chaplain would be there for all the casualties coming in”.

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237 SSG Kevin Jensen, interview 01 October 2010.
5.4.1 “SSG Paul Mitchell”

Staff Sergeant Paul Mitchell has deployed twice during the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan. During each of those deployments, his unit of assignment took casualties and he was able to observe the chaplain’s ministry response.

Mitchell expected the chaplain “to provide spiritual healing in times of great despair”. According to Mitchell his chaplain completely met his expectations. “Upon losing close friends to enemy fire, the chaplain was present upon our return to the FOB and immediately began to console and provides prayer to begin the mourning process.”

When “the Task Force provided a ramp side service to send our brothers’ bodies back home, the Chaplain made the event very honorable in the manner in which he carried it out.”

Mitchell praised his chaplain for his, in the words of LTG Jefferson, ability to be omnipresent. “The chaplain seemed to be everywhere.” The chaplain achieved this when “he would seek us out and eat chow with us or stop by our hooch just to see what we were up to”. This chaplain remained sensitive to the situation and needs of his Soldiers. “He seemed to have words for understanding in our time of emotional emptiness. He wasn’t always speaking on religion; he just spoke on the conversation at hand no matter what the topic, I believe that in some ways he got us through the pain… he carried us through.” He helped “the process of grieving, understanding and ultimately, in some ways, acceptance”. Mitchell’s chaplain did

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238 SSG Paul Mitchell, interview 02 October 2010.

239 FOB = Forward Operating Base

240 A “Ramp Ceremony” is a truncated form of Memorial Ceremony conducted as the remains container is loaded onto the aircraft that will fly the body out of theater.
this through prayer and biblical counsel helping Soldiers “to find strength to continue on in the fight”.

Mitchell gives the following advice to chaplains preparing for combat. “Please do not go into this acting on the notion that you have an answer for reasons unexplained. Do not try to justify death.” In this advice, Mitchell addresses one of the primary ways, identified by James and Friedman, those intending to help actually hurt the grieving. Explaining that many people attempt to console the heart with comments for the head, they explain simply because a comment is intellectually correct does not mean it is helpful. In fact, it can be emotionally harmful. “The intellectually accurate statement… [is]… not only irrelevant, it [is] unintentionally abusive because it belittle[s]…natural and normal emotions.”

5.4.2 “Staff Sergeant Peter Travis”

SSG Peter Travis has deployed twice during the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan. His unit of assignment suffered casualties during both deployments and Travis witnessed his chaplain’s ministry response.

Travis had mixed experiences with chaplains during his deployments. During his first deployment, “the assigned Chaplain made situations worse… I was caught off guard on the way he handled situations… He told a few soldiers to stop whining. They were grown men at war.” This chaplain “didn’t know how to take the edge off of things. Instead of putting out some of the flames from the fire, he

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242 SSG Peter Travis, interview 09 September 2010.
poured more fuel on it.” As a result, “soldiers went away feeling more angry, saddened, or confused after talking with the Chaplain.”

Travis’ experience with his chaplain during the second deployment was starkly different. When speaking of the emotional state after taking casualties, Travis explained, “Some soldiers felt ownership of the bad things that happened to them or the battle buddies. The chaplain… knew how to remove that ownership.”

In echo of LTC Shane’s comment Travis believes in a chaplain needing to be versed in multiple ways of reaching Soldiers. “I’ve seen times that the Chaplain found other avenues to reach the Soldier that were not necessarily from the training they received. I’ve seen a Soldier depressed and at the end of his or her rope, do a complete turn-around after releasing their feelings and taking the advice given by the chaplain. Chaplains need to understand the different approaches to things… There were times that I was done and the chaplain sensed this and pulled me through without knowing, especially when I lost some good friends.” Compared to his first chaplain’s tendency to further enflame bad situations, Travis’ second chaplain “always seemed to have a fire hydrant nearby”.

Travis urges chaplains to remember, “Not all Soldiers are trying to ‘get over.’” Spend time with the Soldiers, get to know them, and see where they are in relation to the unit and its mission. While the unit’s mission is the Soldier’s mission, the Soldier is the chaplain’s mission.
5.4.3 “Sergeant Henry Marquez”

SGT Henry Marquez has deployed once during the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan. During the deployment, his unit of assignment suffered casualties and Marquez observed the chaplain’s ministry response.

Marquez gives testimony to a chaplain who went to where the need was in order to serve Soldiers. When his friend was killed, Marquez did not attend the Memorial Ceremony on FOB Liberty. In his time of grief Marquez did not want the finality the ceremony would seem to bring, “I really didn’t want him to be gone”.

Marquez’s chaplain “went [via convoy] out to our JSS [Joint Security Station Mansour/Bonsai II] and ensured that I was all right by praying with me and comforting me.” Although Marquez describes himself as not the type of person to “open up” he appreciated the comfort and support his chaplain provided and “felt really comfortable talking with [his] chaplain”.

Marquez wants chaplains to know, “there really isn’t anything that can prepare a person for the kinds of trauma that war brings out. I would say, just be strong and keep in mind no matter how strong or happy someone appears to be on the outside, they could really be hurting on the inside. A friendly conversation carries a lot of weight in the military; no matter what anyone says, it is always good to have a friend.”

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243 SGT Henry Marquez, interview 05 October 2010.
5.4.4 “Specialist Samuel Ryken”

SPC Samuel Ryken has deployed twice during the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan. During his second deployment, his unit of assignment suffered casualties and Ryken observed his chaplain’s ministry response.

Although Ryken never even met his chaplain during his first deployment, the chaplain from his second deployment, “was very involved with the soldiers and part of their lives as he worked and lived with them and went where they went”. Ryken identified Memorial Ceremonies, and spending time bringing condolence to the team members of those killed and wounded as particularly effective forms of ministry. “He was a boots on the ground chaplain and was seen as a friend by the soldiers, which is what was needed during our deployment.”

Ryken was the first Soldier to mention chaplain self-care advising that chaplains “take a class or classes in stress reduction because a person can become burnt out rather quickly by becoming the beast of burden for other’s issues”. In addition to this, Ryken suggests keeping realistic expectations. “Recovery, whether mental or physical, is obtained in small steps.” Work with reasonable timeframes, “everything won’t always be fine ten minutes after walking through the doors”.

The thirteen Soldiers participating in this research reported no prior training or expectations regarding chaplains prior to deployment but where unified in what they wanted. They wanted the chaplain to share their struggle and they wanted the chaplain to be with the wounded and properly care for the dead. The self-same priorities were revealed in the Vietnam era survey and Chaplain Barry identified the

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244 SPC Samuel Ryken, interview 02 October 2010.
same expectations among British Soldiers.\textsuperscript{245} Other forms and functions of ministry the chaplain perform are certainly important. However, in the minds of Soldiers in combat, two forms of pastoral care transcend time and national borders. Soldiers in combat want their chaplains there – there with them sharing in the burden of life in a combat zone, there with those suffering from wounds, and there with those passing from this life to the next. To meet Soldiers’ expectations, the Army chaplain must be intentionally engaged in the full-spectrum of the Core Competencies Continuum.

\textbf{5.5 Identified Priorities of Ministry}

From the three identified points of view (Chaplains, Soldiers, and Officers), certain priorities of ministry are found to be in common. It would be easy to simply fall back on the over worn phrase “ministry of presence” to describe the ministry that Soldiers and officers want and chaplains found to meet the needs of the members of their commands. To do so would fall far short of the mark. Ministry of presence is simply too vague and allows the chaplain to do nothing more than arrive on the scene. It requires the chaplain do nothing that brings a sense of the sacred to the situation. To say a ministry of “intentional” presence gets more to the essence of the stated needs and desires of the members of the command. It also more closely reflects the ministry actions reported effective by chaplains. The interviews and historical materials, which informed this chapter, identify the following forms of ministry a chaplain needs to be intentional about in order to perform the United States Army Chaplain’s Role During Times of Traumatic Injury and Death in a Combat Environment.

\textsuperscript{245} Ackerman, \textit{He Was Always There}, 237-238; Barry, “Being Where the Soldiers Are” (see footnotes 223 and 221).
5.5.1 Maintain Composure

Three officers used the term “rock” to describe the chaplain’s composure. Another used the term anvil. In the letter quoted, the officer commended the chaplain’s composure as a “rock that we all leaned on during that whole month”. Two years after the event, sermons, prayers, and other common activities rest deep in the realm of memory. However, the memory of the chaplain maintaining his composure was so significant to it rated a letter of thanks from two different members of the command.

The one chaplain LTG Oscar Jefferson cites as not meeting his expectations failed not by doing something wrong or even outright failing to do anything. He failed the command because he had an emotional breakdown in the face of casualties and was evacuated from theater for his behavioral health problems.

In the medical realm, the chaplain capable of entering the treatment of the wounded and seamlessly be part of the team is praised. This indicates his or her ability to maintain his or her composure in and add value to the medical care during the frantic moments of keeping a wounded Soldier alive.

The Soldiers identified this priority speaking of the chaplains that got them through the pain, put out fires, and being a friend. Chaplains related remaining calm while their Soldiers poured out their emotions, praying with and holding the hurting.

When providing a pastoral response to traumatic injury and death in a combat environment, simply maintaining your composure is an act of ministry. It is, for the moment, the chaplain’s way of saying “Peace! Be still!” to the great storm of
war. The storm may still rage but Soldiers and commanders testify that the chaplain’s maintaining of their composure does bring them peace.

5.5.2 Give Them Something Tangible

Chaplain Stevens regrets not having more things to give away. PrayFAST team tables and other such dispensaries of religious materials have distributed literally tons of items to Soldiers as they deploy. History is replete with accounts of signs of faith being carried, worn, adopted and co-opted by Soldiers and even entire armies en-masse. In the week prior to my deployment to Iraq, I personally passed out over 400 crosses and a similar number of prayer cards. When my commander heard about it he remarked, “Soldiers always want something to carry into battle whether they believe or not.” From these material items to the tangible evidence of God’s abiding presence that is provided in the ordinances/sacraments, chaplains meet an identified need by providing the tangible.

5.5.3 Share in the Burden

This is almost an extension of giving something tangible – it is being tangible. Allen recounts his chaplain assisting identifying the remains of Soldiers Killed-In-Action. Jefferson made clear that words are not enough. The medical corps respondents praised the chaplains that became part of the team. Mitchell identified the value of the chaplain that seeks out the hurting. Travis appreciated his chaplain’s ability to take the feelings of ownership of bad events away from the Soldier. Marquez identified the ministry value of his chaplain being willing to

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246 Mark 4:39

247 See last paragraph of page 101 and footnote 200.
accept risk and travel to see him at the JSS. Commanders want trusted advisors and sounding boards. To provide care to Soldiers through the full-spectrum of the Core Competencies Continuum requires the chaplain to be tangible and share in the burden of those they serve.

5.6 Chaplaincy Concerns

Additionally, the interview material identified two primary chaplaincy concerns. The first is how training can be conducted to increase chaplain capabilities in the Core Competencies Continuum. The second is the need of quality pastoral care for chaplains coupled with chaplain self-care. Furthermore, the current scholarship in the field of trauma indicates a variety of practical concerns for the Army, such as combat exposure’s effect on a Soldier’s behavioral/mental health and the possibility of developing PTSD. These are practical concerns that, when viewed through the lens of “Soul Care,” the chaplain should be able to provide valuable help to the Soldier. The chaplain will thereby be meeting the unified desire of the officers involved in this research; “Take care of my Soldiers”.

The next chapter, Issues in Combat Trauma Ministry, will explore the practical and theological implications of these ministry functions, training for them, and supervisory pastoral care as well as self-care among chaplains.
Chapter 6 – Issues in Combat Trauma Ministry

The Bishop tells us: ‘When the boys come back
They will not be the same; for they have fought
In a just cause: they lead the last attack
On Anti-Christ; their comrade’s blood has bought
New right to breed an honorable race.
They have challenged Death and dared him face to face.’

‘We’re none of us the same!’ the boys reply.
‘For George lost both his legs; and Bill’s stone blind;
Poor Jim’s shot through the lungs and like to die;
And Bert’s gone syphilitic: you’ll not find
A chap who’s served that hasn’t found some change.’
And the bishop said: ‘The ways of God are strange!’

6.1 The Purpose and Structure of Issues in Combat Ministry Chapter

At no fault of their own, civilian clergy rarely understand the condition of Soldiers. This is particularly true of combat Soldiers. They may understand that Soldier life and combat exposure changes one’s outlook. They may want in all earnestness to reach out and help Soldiers during their times of need. Nevertheless, the ability for civilian clergy to actually find and meet a Soldier’s actual need is challenged by the lack of understanding. This is a disconnection caused by not being within the “bond of brotherhood” created in combat. The well-meaning cleric may rightly recognize that “When the boys come back they will not be the same”. That same cleric may be supportive of the war effort and claim it an “attack on Anti-Christ”. However, when the reality of the war is faced with its damages to the body

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and soul, many cannot understand and in frustration say, “The ways of God are strange!”

Issues related to combat trauma ministry are primarily theologically driven questions with direct practical outcomes. Alternately, there are a minority of occasions of practical need, which the chaplain will need to address theologically. In either case, it is important to understand the theological “why” that goes behind the “what” which we do.

In the development of this chapter, I used a hermeneutic of examining identified priorities of ministry against biblical texts to determine if there was theological warrant for the ministry actions identified in Chapter 5. The reason for this is simple. I did the interviews and study of historical materials prior to the theological review. Once I had thematically tabulated the research data and determined the resulting identified priorities of ministry, I had to determine if those priorities could be declared with integrity as Christian ministry with theological justification or if they were simply things that could be done that Soldiers will appreciate.

The challenge was to engage the biblical texts in a way that was an honest attempt to find how “the Scriptures can affect readers today” without simply “proof-texting” to justify the ministry actions identified. Corley, Lemke, and Lovejoy warn against such reader responses that allow the text to be manipulated to mean whatever the reader wishes. While cautious to avoid these potential pitfalls, I also

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recognized the reality that by God’s design “the Bible spoke not only to its original readers or to hearers, but also to us today. An inspired and authoritative Bible has significance and relevance beyond its original circumstances.” I agree with Tidball when he asserts his contention “that the New Testament writers set before us a number of models of ministry, each one of which is shaped by the needs of the church they were serving and, no doubt, by their own individual personalities”.

The context of the Army Chaplaincy certainly presents its unique needs and the US Army Chaplain who intends to serve these “parishioners in uniform” must be ready to utilize a model of ministry that, although unlike local congregational work, can be found to be in congruence with biblical standards.

Thus, I applied a US Army Chaplain’s interpretation based on a four point test:

- it expresses or conforms to orthodox Christian theology;
- it corresponds to typical paradigms of God’s truth or activity as clearly revealed in historically interpreted sections of the Bible;
- it works in the crucible of Christian experience—producing godliness and other valid Christian qualities, and advancing God’s kingdom; and
- it finds confirmation along the full spectrum (racially, sexually, socio-economically, et al.) of Christians within an orthodox faith-community.

Where a creative interpretation meets these criteria, it has a claim to validity—not as the historical meaning of the text, but as a valid “perlocution,” that is, additional effect.

It is my belief that the hermeneutic applied meets these criteria and is a faithful understanding of biblical lessons for today’s reader, particularly the Army Chaplain. Still, faithful Christians disagree over the interpretation and meaning of Scripture on many issues. I expect that there may be a differing of opinions on how

251 Klein, Bloomberg and Hubbard, 153.
253 Klein, Bloomberg and Hubbard, 206.
I applied some of the texts in this thesis. What to do if “sincere believers adopt
different or, in some cases, opposite explanations of the meaning of the same text?
Here Christian grace must prevail. We must listen to each other and appreciate why
others have arrived at alternative explanations.”

The intent of this chapter is to reflect on the theological concerns and
motivations for the chaplain’s role during times of traumatic injury and death in a
combat environment and associated concerns. The findings will help form the basis
of my recommendations in the conclusion. The intent within the chapter is to raise
the point of theological motivation and provide chaplains with the starting point for
deeper theological examination.

To accomplish this purpose, this chapter is structured as follows.

+ 6.2 Theological Motivation for Serving in the Army Chaplaincy: Indicating
the variety of theological positions taken by serving US Army Chaplains.
+ 6.3 Core Competencies Continuum: Theological considerations for the
chaplaincy priorities of Nurture the Living, Care for the Wounded, and
Honor the Dead while paring these competencies with the Army leadership
principles of Be-Know-Do.
+ 6.4 Identified Priorities of Ministry: A theological review of the key acts of
ministry identified by those interviewed, Maintain Composure, Give Them
Something Tangible, and Share the Burden.
+ 6.5 Chaplaincy Concerns: Identification of the practical concerns the US
Army Chaplain Corps faces in light of the research with applicable
theological considerations including, Training and Qualifications, Care for
Chaplains – Self and Supervisory, and Combat Exposure Effects, Soul Care,
and PTSD.

6.2 Theological Motivation for Serving in the Army Chaplaincy

What makes a person leave a civilian congregation to become an Army
chaplain? Is the decision theological – responding to a sense of call, political, or a

254 Klein, Bloomberg and Hubbard, 208.
combination of each? Is it because the cleric is a “hawk” looking for a chance to be in the nation’s wars? Does he or she believe that “war is grounded in the character of God – the God who hates evil and restrains evildoers with acts of force, sometimes carried out through His children”? Should the chaplain believe “that war can actually be a positive act of love entirely consistent with the character of God”? Or, in contrast, should Christian pacifism prevail and the cleric refuse to serve as a chaplain because of an understanding “that military chaplaincy is objectionable on moral grounds… [and] seems to be blessing military activity”. Is there ground between the opposite ends of opinion? One might be tempted to think that these questions are irrelevant; once a person has decided to enter the chaplaincy their view on war is of negligible importance. This position is in error. In fact, the chaplain’s view of war, and accompanying theology of warfare, will strongly dictate how he or she ministers to the Soldiers within his or her care. Take, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Cash’s actions, that do not indicate the provision of significant pastoral care, reflective of “Christian Triumphantism” versus McLaughlin’s care for the wounded that demonstrates a theology of warfare and/or suffering that is focused on the Soldier’s needs and fit perfectly within the Core Competencies Continuum.

Only the person who declines service in the chaplaincy avoids examination of his or her theology of war. In this case, a different question is raised. Regardless, of how you view warfare, what about the Soldiers who need a minister? John

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256 Cole, 7.

Buchanan was forced to confront this question after he declined an opportunity to serve as chaplain based on his opposition to the war in Vietnam.

A few days later I was told there was a man on the phone who said he was from West Point and he sounded angry. "Buchanan," he said when I answered, "I don't like this [expletive deleted] war either. But that doesn't mean I have the right to back away from some of the finest young Americans at the very time their needs are the greatest."

"Who do you think you are?" he asked. "You've just decided not to be a minister to the brightest and best of our young people, the ones who will go on to become national leaders in the military, education, science, politics, at the very moment in their lives when their values are being formed. I hope you feel good about that." Then he hung up. 258

Ministers must accept that men and women join the military. Many of those men and women are Christians and need the opportunity to have their already formed faith supported in times of need. Furthermore, there are those of no faith who are in the most formative time of their lives. They are under the pressure of entering adulthood with the compounding pressure of serving in the military. As they face questions and seek answers, chaplains fill a crucial role in providing direction. When in combat both groups will face the reality of traumatic injury and death. The chaplain is a ready resource to help them make sense of the losses. In light of concerns such as these, Buchanan developed a new appreciation for the chaplaincy. "Being a faithful Christian means risking getting one's hands dirty. I've learned to respect those who minister to people in the military, even if I may disagree with what the military is doing." 259

In this view there is room to recognize

258 Buchanan, 3.
259 Buchanan, 3.
a position that holds that “God is there for the individuals within war…[but] he is not involved in the political or cultural problems that cause war”.

A theology of ministry, the sacraments/ordinances, ecclesiology, and other matters each shape how chaplains perform their duties. Likewise, the chaplain’s theology of warfare has important ministry implications. While the theology of warfare is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to visit briefly theology of warfare themes that affect the Army chaplain’s ministry. The first theme to consider is the concept of God ordained/blessed warfare.

You will find Soldiers and chaplains alike that cling to the concept of God’s blessings upon their actions in combat. They hold a belief that God has either specifically ordained or blessed the United States’ participation in any particular conflict. Cash’s memoir provides a prime example. “The God of the Bible is a God who fights for what is right…and has for centuries been mightily demonstrated wherever courageous warriors, inspired by a worthy cause, have stepped foot on the field of battle and marched against the forces of evil and tyranny.” Some even frame the United States being in the Middle East within their dispensational theology and its unique eschatological viewpoint. The use of Old Testament references to justify modern combat actions without regard to original text context frequently occurs among those holding this theology of warfare.

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262 In Cash’s *Table in the Presence*, 35 of the 51 biblical quotes are from Old Testament texts.
Chaplain Sam Daniels counseled a Soldier who applied for conscientious objector status that he was outside of God’s will. He further warned that to continue to refuse to participate in the war placed the Soldier’s status before God at risk. Daniels then read to the Soldier from the Bible, “Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord with slackness, and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from bloodshed.” In this example, Daniels explained how he dealt with Soldiers facing concerns about their participation in warfare. In doing so, he revealed that he is more a chaplain to the cause than he is a chaplain to the Soldiers fighting for the cause. Daniels’ theology is one that ascribes righteousness to the United States. In his belief, the USA does what God wills. By extension, because the US Army does what the USA wants, the US Army does what God wills. He then extrapolates this line of reasoning to the belief that if the Soldier does what the Army wants, the Soldier is doing God’s will. Understanding Daniels’ theology of warfare, with the USA standing in for ancient Israel, it is easy to understand how he effectively told a Soldier – “fight or be cursed by God”.

Daniels is not alone. The use of passages such as 2 Sam 22:35, Ps 18:34, and Ps 144:1, which each speak of God training hands for war, and the liberal application of the various imprecatory psalms is not uncommon within the chaplaincy. What these chaplains believe directly informs how they minister. Furthermore, it affects their ability to minister in times of traumatic injury and death caused by the combat. Combat, that according to their selective use of scripture, is blessed by God. As Soldiers are injured themselves, and other Soldiers see their friends injured and killed, it can be hard for them to accept the idea that God is

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263 Ch Daniels told me of this in a conversation during our deployment to Iraq, 2006-2008.

264 Jeremiah 48:10
blessing them. “Warriors themselves see the inadequacy of this. They know there is little comfort to be found in the insincere rationalization that the death of a friend in combat is a good thing since God must have willed it.”\textsuperscript{265} Additionally, the very chaplains who promote such teachings, when faced with traumatic events, can have crises of faith of their own.\textsuperscript{266} Chaplain Anderson identifies himself with this theology of combat. “My theology of combat is based on the Old Testament. Sometimes good men must kill bad men for evil to be stopped.” Anderson also admitted its shortfalls while in combat. When asked how it affected his ministry to the traumatized he replied, “It didn’t…I would go to my hooch and placate myself with the idea that they had died holy deaths. It was only a pseudo-comfort. My theology was real to me before I went and after I returned but it went missing while I was there.”\textsuperscript{267} When asked about New Testament influences, Anderson cited Romans 13.

Opposite the theme of a Holy War motivation is a theme of “I’m there for the Soldiers”. Compare the previous examples with Chaplain Curt Bowers and his reason for serving. A concern for Soldiers’ spiritual health, motivated by his own conversion to Christ as an enlisted Soldier, prompted Bowers to become an Army chaplain.\textsuperscript{268} When Bowers was on a troop transport ship headed to Vietnam he spent time with Soldiers in serious study of the scriptures. They worked their way through the commandment not to murder and how murder and killing are distinguished from one another. They wrestled through imperatives such as “love

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\textsuperscript{265} Jones and Beckman, 29.
\textsuperscript{266} Ch Mike Collins, 2008. See page 21.
\textsuperscript{267} Ch Scott Anderson, interview 09 June 2010.
\textsuperscript{268} Curt Bowers, Forward Edge of the Battle Area: A Chaplain’s Story (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1987).
\end{flushright}
thine enemy” and “turn the other cheek”. They also studied the few examples of Soldiers in scripture such as those who came to John the Baptist and the centurion Jesus commended for his faith. They explored the tension between “living and dying by the sword” and Jesus’ direction to his disciples to buy a sword. Together they worked though what it meant when scripture instructs that, “if possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men”. All of this study was done within the context of a nation divided over the morality of war in general and of the Vietnam War particularly.

Bowers continues his explanation of ministry to Soldiers. He wanted to be like Jesus who had left Heaven for Earth and became a part of “our temptations and trials, our hearts and weaknesses” to the Soldiers. To accomplish that end Bowers chose to “endure their hardships, to experience their dangers, to walk with them as much as possible”. In doing this, he learned their names, became close to them, and was able to share his faith with them. When called upon to minister to Soldiers wounded and killed by enemy fire and their surviving friends, he did so with pastoral concern for the Soldier. Throughout his memoir, Bowers demonstrates his nurture of the living, care for the wounded, and honoring of the dead exemplifying the performance of the Core Competencies Continuum in his ministry.

Chaplain Randal Svenson is as extreme an example of this theme as Daniels is the other. Svenson describes himself as a pacifist only in the Army for the care

269 Bowers, 38-41.

270 Bowers, 47.

271 Bowers, 47.

272 Bowers, 48, 50, 53, 71, 76.

273 Chaplain Randal Svenson, interview 19 July 2011.
of Soldiers. Svenson did not always feel this way. He describes himself as a former hawk who would have earlier in life been just as prone to apply Old Testament text to modern combat. Before Svenson actually went to war, his views had moderated greatly. This change came about through talking with actual combat veterans, trying to provide meaningful ministry to them, and frequently failing to do so. This motivated a deeper study of just how one can minister to those who feel as if their soul was damaged in combat. Through this, he concluded that the first step is not to tell the suffering veteran how much God had blessed him and the war he had fought. Further, he learned that, even if it was true, it did not matter to the one that did not believe it to be true. Finally, he concluded that ministry in the face of trauma meant somehow reducing the burden of the traumatized. When he finally did go to war, Svenson still believed the US mission in the Global War on Terrorism was just but Soldiers were his priority. It was not long into his deployment before Svenson started ignoring the question of the unit’s mission stating succinctly, “I do not care what the mission is. The Soldiers conduct the unit’s mission. My mission is the Soldiers.” Svenson accepts that warfare is a reality in the world but rejects that one must be confined to the positions of “for” or “against”. “Things seemed to be ever changing. I could not keep track of who was right and who was wrong. Finally, I decided it did not matter – the Soldiers and their needs are what mattered.” To meet those Soldiers needs Svenson had an intentional ministry. “I conducted worship services, counseled Soldiers, I went to where they were – on the FOB, at a COP or JSS – I would go and be where they were. I prayed with the wounded and honored the dead. I did my best to comfort the grieving.” Svenson did all of this while reading through a copy of Thomas Merton’s Passion for Peace. That volume remains on one of his nearby shelves. Svenson finds it odd that those chaplains with
an affinity for quoting from the Old Testament, seem to universally ignore this passage of messianic prophecy from Zechariah.

   Behold, your king is coming to you;
   righteous and having salvation is he,
   humble and mounted on a donkey,
   on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
   I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
   and the war horse from Jerusalem;
   and the battle bow shall be cut off,
   and he shall speak peace to the nations;
   his rule shall be from sea to sea,
   and from the River to the ends of the earth. 274

The majority of chaplains fall between the two described extremes. There are more chaplains on the end toward Holy War than there are on the end toward pacifism but few are as dramatic examples as Daniels or Svenson. Each end of the spectrum is marked with dangers, a few of which are remarkably similar. The chaplains at the Holy War end have the potential of supporting anything the command wants and turning a blind-eye to abuses of power. The dangers to the value of their ministry is that they can be seen as nothing more than tools of the command, they can be insensitive to the needs of those in times of doubt, and their own theology can be their undoing when it is challenged through combat trauma exposure. The chaplain at the other end, having disengaged from the actions of command, by default has turned a blind-eye to potential abuse. Without a concept of the larger mission, there can be a disconnection from the Soldiers performing the mission. Furthermore, with a single focus on the Soldier’s concerns the chaplain can become antagonistic to the valid mission of the command and do damage to the cause of the Soldiers he or she is there to support.

274 Zechariah 9:9b–10
A chaplain’s theology of war and its subsequent suffering should be of great concern to the Chaplain Corps as a whole. It should be of particular concern to those who teach incoming chaplains at the US Army Chaplain Center and School. The structure of the training should at least initiate a moderation of the two extremes and promote a form of chaplain ministry that will be mission minded but Soldier focused. In reality, this is difficult to achieve because a person’s deeply held beliefs rarely shift without enduring a significant emotional event. This is reflected in the well-known maxim of Chaplain Mark Jones, former instructor at the Chaplain School, who states, “Your theology is worthless until it has been tested in the crucible of human suffering.” If this dictum is true, and I believe it is, it is important to structure training to place a challenge on incoming chaplains’ theology. This challenge should allow for an examination of, and strengthen appreciation for, the theology behind the Core Competencies Continuum.

6.3 Core Competencies Continuum

Army leadership has long been summarized with the phrase Be-Know-Do. The Leader must “Be”. This refers to the high standards of personal values and attributes the Soldier must possess. The Soldier must “Know”. He or she needs to have mastery of Soldier skills. The Soldier must “Do”. Values, attributes, and skills are without value if the Soldier never acts on them. These concepts can easily be translated to the chaplaincy. William Oglesby explains that in pastoral care there are

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275 Ch Mark Jones is known throughout the US Army Chaplain Corps for this much repeated maxim.

276 Found in FM 6-22 Army Leadership, Oct 2006 and FM 22-100 Army Leadership (previous edition) August 1999. “Be-Know-Do” pre-dates both of these publications in the Army lexicon.
three priorities. They are a matter of “right knowing (insight and self-understanding), right doing (behavior modification), and right being (personal transformation)”.

The student chaplains must transform from being disconnected members of civilian clergy and “Be” Army chaplains, ministers that choose to endure Soldiers’ hardships, to experience their dangers, to walk with them as much as possible. Chaplains must “Know” the three elements of the Core Competencies Continuum: Nurture the Living, Care for the Wounded, and Honor the Dead with practical understanding of how to execute these modes of care as well as theological justification for each. Finally, the chaplain must “Do”. He or she may be in the thick of battle, may know what to do and why, believe in the theological importance of the actions, and still fail if he or she does not actually do what they are called to do.

6.3.1 Nurture the Living

The second definition of shepherd in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary is, “a member of the clergy providing spiritual care and guidance for a congregation”. After the resurrection Jesus tells Peter to feed His lambs, tend His sheep, and feed His sheep. “Most students of the Gospel agree that the procedure stands in relation to Peter’s repeated denials of Jesus.” In the process of re-establishing Peter, who seemingly forfeited his right to be considered a disciple, as leader in the faith, Jesus installed him as a shepherd of Christ’s flock.

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279 Beasley-Murray, 404-405.
turn, instructs the elders of the church to “shepherd the flock of God that is among you”.\textsuperscript{280} Paul also instructs the leaders of the church to be shepherds. In Acts he tells them to, “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.”\textsuperscript{281} In Ephesians, he explains that Jesus gave some people within the church to be shepherds for the equipping and building of the body of Christ.\textsuperscript{282}

The role of a shepherd, understood well at the time when the Bible was written, is not as well understood today. “It is not only that we are unfamiliar with farms and sheep; it is that we no longer think in such personal and natural terms.”\textsuperscript{283} The modern image of a shepherd, for those who are familiar, is quite removed from that of a shepherd during biblical times. The role of shepherd in biblical setting was one of critical importance. “The good shepherd was especially concerned for the condition of the flock, careful that the animals not be overdriven (cf. Gen 33:13–14); and would sometimes carry helpless lambs in his arms (cf. Isa 40:11), or on his shoulders.”\textsuperscript{284} “Shepherds stayed with their sheep day and night.”\textsuperscript{285} Being a shepherd was a position involving danger and “it required courage”.\textsuperscript{286} Tidball rightly observes that being a shepherd during biblical times was more akin to

\begin{itemize}
\item 1 Peter 5:1-4
\item Acts 20:28
\item Ephesians 4:11-12
\item Derek Tidball, Skilful Shepherds: Explorations in Pastoral Theology (Nottingham, England: Apollos, 1997), 15. See also Tidball, Builders and Fools: Leadership the Bible Way (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 133-149.
\item Allen C. Myers, The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 939.
\item Tidball, Skilful, 47.
\end{itemize}
dangerous work of the cattlemen of the American western frontier than to modern
day, peaceful, sheep farming. David alludes to this fact when he offers as his
qualifications for fighting Goliath that he has killed lion and bear in defense of the
flock he was guarding as a shepherd.

Just as the danger of being a shepherd has been removed from modern
understanding, so has the related danger of ministry. A typical modern parish
setting is quite calm and free of personal danger in the majority of today’s world. In
there is no mention of the hazardousness of a shepherd’s work when the bible was
written. The Army chaplaincy is certainly more like hazardous mission field
mission work or the dangerous spiritual shepherding that occurred on the western
frontier. “The frontier preacher… walk[ed] this hazardous portion of the earth [and]
had to know its immediate needs for his, and his flock’s, survival. His people
were fighting for existence. Their problem was not how to live beautifully, but how
to live at all.” These frontier ministers “lived and worked exactly as did their
flocks; their dwellings were little cabins with dirt floors, and instead of beadsteads,
skin-covered polebunks: they cleared the ground, split rails, [and] planted corn… on
equal terms with their parishioners.” This being with the flock is the task of
Army chaplains. In this sharing in the hardships and facing the dangers of the flock

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287 Tidball, *Skilful*, 47.
288 1 Samuel 17:34-37
290 Ross Phares, *Bible in Pocket Gun in Hand: The Story of Frontier Religion* (Lincoln, NE:
University of Nebraska Press, 1971), 25.
291 Phares, 155.
the chaplain earns the right to be a shepherd. The sheep learn the shepherd’s voice as the shepherd gives human voice to the “Good Shepherd,” Jesus.\textsuperscript{292} Doing so the chaplain can perform the responsibilities of ministry identified by Martin Bucer.

1. To draw to Christ those who are alienated.
2. To lead back those who have been drawn away.
3. To secure amendment of life for those who fall into sin.
4. To strengthen weak and silly Christians.
5. To preserve Christians who are whole and strong and urge them forward to the good.\textsuperscript{293}

This understanding of a shepherd’s duty is the very epitome of a chaplain’s ministry. The chaplains are to be with the Soldiers in their charge. Chaplain Emil Kapaun described his ministry as bringing back straying sheep and traveled extensively to visit his Soldiers scattered across Korea at the start of the conflict.\textsuperscript{294}

The chaplain, as shepherd, nurtures the living by tending to their needs, being concerned for their condition, and helping carry their burden. In this way, the shepherd becomes Soldier so that the Soldier can meet Christ. This puts into practice the practice of Paul who became all things to all people that he might save some, sharing with them the blessings of the Gospel.\textsuperscript{295}

6.3.2 Care for the Wounded

Jesus said that we would always have the poor with us.\textsuperscript{296} It appears from history that He could have likewise said that we would always have the wounded

\textsuperscript{292} John 10:1-10


\textsuperscript{294} William L. Maher, \textit{A Shepherd in Combat Boots} (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1997), 77, 88.

\textsuperscript{295} 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

\textsuperscript{296} Matthew 26:11
with us. When asked for a sign of the coming of the close of the age, Jesus tells His disciples that there will be “wars and rumors of wars” but they should not be alarmed by this fact because “this must take place” 297 No single nation has been at war non-stop since these words were uttered but it only takes a brief review of history to see that there has been a nation, somewhere in the world, engaged in warfare either with another nation or with itself at almost every point along the extended calendar of human history. In the United States the “Global War on Terrorism,” now ten years on, has been renamed, “Ongoing Overseas Contingency Operations (OOCO)”. The name change has not changed the fact that Soldiers are engaged in combat operations with the stated intent of destroying the purveyors of terrorist activity. Army leadership tells Soldiers that they are serving the Army during an era of “persistent conflict”. Still, some of those Soldiers involved in the persistent conflict of OOCO are wounded and some die. Therefore, the chaplain must understand the theological underpinnings of his or her role in providing ministry during times of traumatic injury in a combat environment.

The Gospels are replete with examples of Jesus’ healing of the sick and infirm. The “Great Commission,” as recorded by Mark, indicates Jesus’ expectation for His followers to be involved in healing ministry. The book of Acts records healings brought about by the Apostles.298 These examples make Jesus’ concern for those needing healing and His intent for His followers to be part of the healing process obvious. Furthermore, the ministry of healing is not restricted to those who are already considered insiders. In fact, Jesus clearly extends His ministry to those who were viewed as being outside of Jewish life. Instead, through His actions, Jesus

297 Matthew 24:3-6; see also Mark 13:4-7

298 Acts 5:12-16
demonstrates the universal promise that was given to Abraham that “all the families of the Earth shall be blessed”. \(^{299}\) The Gospel according to Luke is of particular value in demonstrating this point.

Luke sets the tone of extending the Gospel, and therefore spiritual healing, beyond the Jewish population with his description of the ministry of John the Baptist. John rebukes the Jewish crowds initially. He then makes clear that it is not by family lineage but through repentance that one is reconciled with God. \(^{300}\) When the outsiders arrive, here represented by the tax collectors and soldiers, they are not rejected but given guidance for righteous living. In the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, He identifies His own purpose through the reading of Isaiah 61:1-2 which identifies both spiritual and physical needs the Messiah will meet. “The Lukan Jesus… is deeply concerned with the literal, physical needs of men (Acts 10:38), as with their directly spiritual needs.” \(^{301}\) Luke is replete with examples of Jesus’ ministry to both the insider and outsider. He healed the many that came to Him in 5:40-41 and preached in the synagogues 42-44 as examples of healing the insiders. He healed the centurion’s servant, an outsider (although of good reputation among the Jews), and forgave the sins of the woman whom the religious leadership of the day clearly rejected. \(^{302}\)

In Luke, Jesus makes clear that His servants are also to minister to the outsider extending the love of God to everyone when he shares the parable of the

\(^{299}\) Genesis 12:3

\(^{300}\) Luke 3:3-11


\(^{302}\) Luke 7:2-10, 36-50
Good Samaritan. This parable is of particular value to the Army chaplain as it details the demonstration of doing the will of God by being involved in the healing of another. Furthermore, in the parable of the Great Banquet the master orders his servants to go out and to compel people to come in that his house would be filled. With Jesus as master and we as His servants it is clear that we should be actively providing pastoral ministry to those who are within the faith and those outside of the faith. What the extent, shape, or content of that ministry is brings disagreement among chaplains and students at the CHBOLC.

Jesus described the judgment to His disciples stating that the blessed who will inherit the kingdom are those who gave Him food, gave Him drink, welcomed Him, clothed Him, and visited Him while sick or in prison. When the righteous asked when they had done such things, Jesus replies, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”

Allowing for the understanding that the list of sources of distress and relief are for example, and not a restrictive delineation, we can add, “I was wounded” and recognize the theological imperative for the chaplain’s intentional ministry for wounded Soldiers. From the examples given in Luke it would not seem as if there would be any difficulty in seeing Jesus’ priority in meeting the needs of the needy. There is, however, a question raised in relation to this and the related ministry expectations.

The scope of “my brothers” is a matter of some debate. This debate is demonstrated among chaplain students in the basic course during the teaching of

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303 Luke 10:25-37
304 Luke 14:12-24
305 Matthew 25:40
religious support to the wounded and dying.\textsuperscript{306} The theological perspectives held on the topic have direct bearing on ministry applications. Therefore, although the following argument may seem extended beyond what is necessary, this subject needs to be explored more fully than one might first think. There is a contingent that argues the position that it is a phrase, which restricts the scope to Christians. This is done through comparison with Jesus’ other uses of the phrase such as Matthew 12:48-49, 23:8 and 28:10; as well as John 20:17. They further support this position through the epistle texts of Romans 8:29 and Hebrews 2:11-12.\textsuperscript{307} While others seek to enlarge the scope claiming:

While Jesus expresses solidarity with his messengers in [Matthew] 10:40–42, the same kind of language is used regarding children in 18:5: “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me” here, as in the parallel in Mark 9:37, “child” is to be taken literally (see also Matt. 19:14). It is not because of a faith relationship but because of their vulnerability that Jesus identifies himself with children. It appears more probable, therefore, that Matthew intends “brothers” in 25:40 to be taken in a much broader sense than is usual in his Gospel: the poor and the distressed, whoever they may be, should be regarded as Jesus’ brothers and sisters.\textsuperscript{308}

Depending on the interpretation you find most convincing there is a direct ministry relationship. For those favoring the latter interpretation the application is straightforward. The chaplain ministers to all Soldiers in their times of need because doing so is ministry to Jesus. For those who prefer the former interpretation, the chaplain remembers that the majority of Soldiers within the Army claim allegiance to one denomination of Christian faith or another. The chaplain’s role then is to

\textsuperscript{306} With three years of exposure to the teaching of Religious Support to the Wounded and Dying as well as Preparation for Mass Casualty Operations at the CHBOLC, I know that this question is a consistent matter of conversation and significant disagreement.


\textsuperscript{308} Douglas R. A. Hare, \textit{Matthew} (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 290.
minster to those Christian Soldiers within his or her charge. This is reflective of the purpose of the Supreme Court ruling that, although the chaplaincy is in violation of the establishment clause, it is only to ensure the free exercise of all service members regardless of wherever the military assigns them. Civilian clergy were deemed, “unable to understand the military mind and address a soldier’s needs. They do not know the system or how to use it, or how to get help. They would be incapable of helping a soldier in combat.” Therefore, civilian clergy could never adequately provide such constitutional protections. Only chaplains with their unique training and official position within the military would have adequate understanding of the particular needs presented by the military, and have access to soldiers in their places of duty, particularly in combat, in order to perform or provide for proper religious support.

One might mistakenly think that this understanding would restrict a chaplain’s ministry to those of like faith. That is not the case. If the shepherd has truly turned Soldier that Soldiers might know Christ, he or she is equally charged to help alleviate the suffering of those intended to hear the Gospel. James insists that for faith to “Be” real, the person claiming to “Know” the Gospel must “Do” things that alleviate suffering, putting the claimed faith into practice and thereby acquainting the listener to the Gospel.

Later in his epistle, James gives direct guidance to his readers for their ministry to those among them who are sick. I apply this passage to the wounded

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310 Drazin, 81.

311 James 2:14-16

312 James 5:14-15
because “there is no reason to consider ‘sick’ as referring exclusively to physical illness. The word asthenei literally means ‘to be weak.’”313 For those who are “weak,” the elders of the church are to pray over them and anoint them with oil. “Elders” here is not a remark as to the age of those praying but rather to the office held within the church, that of shepherding the flock.314 The chaplain, shepherd of the Soldiers within the unit of his or her assignment, has biblical warrant to pray on their behalf when they are ill or, within this context, wounded.

This application of James is not without concerns. The first is the clear instruction that the ill should call for the elders to come and pray. Strict compliance with this leaves the chaplain waiting in his or her office or chapel until summoned specifically by the wounded Soldier. This is unnecessarily restrictive. It is common to say a person who is ill needs to call a doctor or for an ambulance. However, when one is too ill, been traumatized, or is in shock, others call for doctors and emergency services on their behalf. It is simply understood that when a person is in emergency medical need somebody needs to call 911.315

In the combat environment, the Battle Captain ensures notification of incoming wounded to those responsible for providing care. This includes all on-duty medical personnel and the chaplain. Allowing for this adaptation, the one who calls upon the chaplain gets the chaplain on the scene immediately. Waiting for the Soldier to ask could result in a Soldier’s death prior to the arrival of the chaplain.

When the chaplain then approaches the wounded Soldier, the Soldier is free to either

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315 999 in the UK.
accept the chaplain’s offer of ministrations or reject them. If the Soldier rejects prayer or other forms of direct spiritual care, the chaplain can still abide by James’ instruction and be a presence of Christ in the Soldier’s time of need by providing care in other ways assisting in alleviating his or her suffering.

The second notable concern regards the portion of the passage that reads, “Is any among you…” Does this mean the directive is restricted to those who are within the Christian faith? James’ repeated use of “brothers” in the lead up to the passage strongly indicates so. Could the comment be directed to the brothers, but be inclusive of those in the larger community with its concern for “any” that may be among them? This position is without significant critical support. But, does that mean it does not have value in a pastoral care application?

I do not advocate a careless handling of the text. However, ultimately this will be a question of hermeneutical priorities. “Biblical hermeneutics inquires into the conditions under which the interpretation of biblical texts may be judged possible, faithful, accurate, or productive in relation to some specific goal.” Allowing for the expansion of application is possible and can be productive in relation to the specific goal of reaching Soldiers with the love of God during their times of need. The expansion is also faithful to the modality of Gospel mission, to seek the lost and call them to repentance.

Some will argue that a lack of accurate handling of the text offsets these values. In this, they will favor an exegetical model that demands precise accuracy

316 James 5:7, 9, 10, and 12


318 Students in the CHBOLC often do argue from this position; personal experience 2009 – present.
and strict application of the derived meaning. As a counter-argument, this places the interpreter in danger of the very thing James rails against in the epistle, faith without works. If a person interprets the text through a hermeneutical lens without the intent of ministerial application, one may “Know” the meaning but not “Do” anything to meet the needs of the flock and thereby fail to “Be” the shepherd the chaplain is called to be. In light of these considerations, the chaplain is well served to follow the guidance of Paul who instructs, “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

Finally, there is the concern that some will take this passage to mean that all those for whom the chaplain prays will receive physical healing. That significantly overstates the message of the passage. While not invalidating the possibility of physical healing, the biblical record provides many such examples, the wording here offers a greater breadth of potential meaning. Primarily, we see that that the “prayer of faith will save” the one who is ill and that “the Lord will raise him up” with a promise that his sins “will be forgiven”. Physical healing wrought through appropriate medical care and divine intervention is an amazing gift of God. Still, the chaplain must be ever mindful of the one who can destroy not just the body, but also the soul in hell, and be concerned with spiritual healing. In those cases where the body is destroyed, it is the chaplain’s duty to render the Soldier proper honors.

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319 Galatians 6:10

320 See account of Chaplain Collins on page 21.

321 Matthew 10:28
6.3.3 Honor the Dead

“There should be no real neglect of the dead, because it has bad effect on the living; for each soldier values himself as highly as though he were living in a good house at home.”

In the Army when a Soldier dies, there is a Memorial Ceremony with the intent to Honor the Dead. Chaplains train extensively in the conducting of the Memorial Ceremony. There are lectures, slide presentations, and repeated hands-on practical exercises. The emphasis on the Memorial Ceremony is distinct and intentional. They are command performance events. It “is a command program with ceremonial orientation” and attendance can be mandatory.

The unit that actually lost the soldier and the chain of command, up to and including the Commanding General, attends the Memorial Ceremony. During a Memorial Ceremony, “the major focus will be on military tributes and honors”.

The memorial ceremony standards allow for the reading of scripture and prayer however, the chaplain’s remarks will be limited to five minutes and those remarks will be a “brief tribute to the life of the soldier”.

The memorial litany provided in the Book of Worship for United States Forces epitomizes this “moralistic, therapeutic deism”

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324 TC 16-2, 3-10.

use of “God” without specific faith expectations beyond generalized acceptance of God’s existence and the traditional use of male pronouns for God.\textsuperscript{326}

Let us give thanks to God for the Land of our birth with all its charted liberties. For all the wonder of our country’s story:

\textbf{We give you thanks, O God.}

For Leaders in nation and state, and for those who in days past and in these present times have labored for the commonwealth:

\textbf{We give you thanks, O God.}

For those who in times and places have been true and brave, and in the world’s common ways have lived upright lives and ministered to their fellows:

\textbf{We give you thanks, O God.}

For those who served their country in her hour of need, and especially for those who gave even their lives in that service:

\textbf{We give you thanks, O God.}

O almighty God and merciful Father, as we remember these your servants, remembering with gratitude their courage and strength, we hold before you those who mourn them. Look upon your bereaved servants with your mercy. As this day brings them memories of those they have lost awhile, may it also bring your consolation and the assurance that their loved ones are alive now and forever in your living presence.

\textbf{Amen.}\textsuperscript{327}

A further example of this use of “ceremonial deism,” as it is termed by Chaplain John Laing, comes from the memoir of Chaplain Percy Hickcox.\textsuperscript{328} “A large assembly of soldiers gathered… The Commanding General, Major General


\textsuperscript{328} John D. Laing, \textit{In Jesus Name: Evangelicals and Military Chaplaincy} (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 144.
Paul J. Mueller, spoke concerning the noble sacrifices of these men who have already consecrated this soil.\(^{329}\) The effect of this is “to substitute country for God, the flag for the cross, and good citizenship (or wholesome soldieryship) for Christian commitment”.\(^{330}\) The nature of these events can be a source of irritation for some chaplains, particularly those of evangelical leanings. Likewise, my own experience of conducting Memorial Ceremonies while in Iraq left me jaded as to their value, a fact evident in the tone of an earlier assignment for this degree course.\(^{331}\)

For these reasons, it may seem as if there is no theological grounding for the Honor the Dead portion of the Core Competencies Continuum. This assessment is in error for a multitude of reasons. The most important reason being that, although the Army’s priority, the memorial Ceremony is not the sole way one honors the dead.

The second reason is the reality that Soldiers find value in the Memorial Ceremony. This fact, uncovered while researching through the interview process and reading source material, surprised me. Personally, I had got to a point where I dismissed the value of the ceremony out-of-hand. Recognizing the value to Soldiers in the chaplain’s care, to Honor the Dead in a well-conducted Memorial Ceremony becomes a means to Nurture the Living, fulfilling the Core Competencies Continuum.

Finally, it is a chance for the chaplain to be with the Soldiers he or she shepherds. When faced with a choice between participating in ceremonial deism


and abstaining all-together, Laing presents a good argument for the former. “I would rather have the opportunity to be visible, to conduct a public ministry, and most importantly to pray in order to make a difference.” Whether motivated from a simple sense of “something is better than nothing” or a doctrinal understanding that clergy act in persona Christi, the chaplain is right to fully engage in the ceremony. Soldiers, whether the chaplain’s personal theology accepts the concept or not, frequently see the chaplain’s presence as equivalent to the presence of God. This is evidenced by comments such as, “The chaplain is in the patrol; we’ve got God with us today.” Chaplain Kittleson reflects on his time in Iraq, “sitting in a bunker one can hear even through the muffle of protective masks, a nervous “Well, at least we have a chaplain in here with us. We’re safe.” Inversely, the chaplain’s absence can infer God is absent. These potentially controversial theological constructs should not be the only motivation for the chaplain. Pragmatically, if the chaplain does not execute a quality Memorial Ceremony it will appear to the Soldiers that the chaplain does not care. That perception will damage any future ministry potential the chaplain may have had and limit his or her ability to Nurture the Living.

Moving from the Memorial Ceremony, the chaplain can honor the dead combat trauma victim in a variety of ways. The typical minister’s manual or book

332 Laing, 155.


334 I heard words to this effect repeatedly when I would accompany a patrol in order to get to a COP or JSS for the sake of Soldier visitation and conducting of religious services. Other chaplains remark as to hearing similar comments.

of worship is devoid of guidance for these types of death, but there are certainly valid guiding principles. Actions upon notification of death such as, “the minister should go immediately” and a “few quiet words, a Scripture verse, and a brief prayer” are still sound. It is shocking how many chaplains fail to go to the place where they have dead soldiers. One chaplain told me that he did not go because, “the man is dead – what can I do for him?”

Chaplains are frequently referred to as “muddy boots ministers”. At times of trauma and death, it may be better said that chaplains need to be “bloody boot ministers”. “Most people don’t get near dying people or death and so to be exposed to a situation with blood and loss of life is a terrifying experience.” This is due to the traumatic cause of death in general, but also the underlying fact that death is a taboo subject in western society. The taboo nature of death inclines people to not ask questions or express their feelings, even though death raises many questions, which should be addressed. A chaplain can be a great calming influence; more importantly, the soldiers expect the chaplain to be present.

Whether it is due to the practices of their own faith (such as Roman Catholics which make up nearly 25% of our Active Duty Soldiers) or the general idea that the Minister/Priest/Rabbi/“Man of God” is supposed to do something, you have access to the deceased. Because you have access to the deceased, you have access to all who are around.

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337 Personal recollections from time spent in Iraq October 2006 – January 2008. This lack of ministry at time of death was the motivation for my developing the *Behind the Curtain* training presentation.


340 Steven Rindahl, “Behind the Curtain” (Training Presentation, Multinational Division Baghdad, Camp Liberty, Iraq, 2007).
The chaplain is not only expected to be there, he or she is expected to do something. For this reason, chaplains must think in advance, as to what they are willing to do or not do. Prayer is key; the “last rites,” no matter the faith of the chaplain, is a means to do ministry. Chaplain Connie Walker tells of honoring the dead in Vietnam.

I rendered a laying on of hands and used words of anointing…for each dear dead soldier…It was turning dark fast so we could only lift the wounded out. The dead stayed until morning. I slept among the dead…It was a night of near exhaustion but a night of deep and solemn prayer in our Lord’s name. The chaplain was to be with his flock, wherever they went, and most assuredly when they were in the dark valley of death.341

Regardless of the chaplain’s belief on the nature of the deceased Soldier’s eternal destiny, he or she must pray for the Soldier. The chaplain does not need to pray the deceased is in heaven or violate his or her own theological convictions. Prayers can be offered concerning God’s creation being destroyed, for comfort to those now mourning, a variety of other suitable prayers, or even simply a time of consecrated silence with the deceased. Doing so returns a sense of humanity to the situation and inserts recognition of the divine. When everyone else is thinking nothing else can be done, prayer demonstrates that there is more than the temporary earthly life. There is a life that comes after.

The care provided through honoring the dead makes a difference to Soldiers. COL Gonsalves (Armor Commander), in his recommendation that a subordinate chaplain receive honors from the Armor branch, wrote:

Most noteworthy was his compassion, counseling, and pastoral care following the tragic loss, identification and memorial for our seven Warriors

killed in the catastrophic IED blast… he personally administered the Last Rites and his demonstration of respect for the fallen provided solace for many Soldiers suffering from shock and grief.  

Soldiers are at their greatest need of spiritual care during this critical stage of grief, shock, and anger and the chaplain acting as a minister of God does not cause the “awkward embarrassment” of seemingly inappropriate entanglement of church and state. Instead, it would be awkward if the chaplain failed to perform his or her duties as a minister. Being there with the body, with the command, with the friends, demonstrates that the chaplain truly cares. When he or she prays, touches, holds, anoints, and speaks of the love and comfort of God over the Soldier they lost, people get a chance to see God’s love even in the worst of tragedies.

Having reflected upon the theological support for the Core Competencies Continuum, it is time to turn attention to identified priorities of ministry in the performance of that continuum and chaplaincy concerns.

6.4 Identified Priorities of Ministry

6.4.1 Maintain Composure

In the crucifixion of Jesus, the disciples witnessed the greatest trauma imaginable. The brutality of this form of execution coupled with the fact that the one executed was expected to be the triumphant messiah was too much for them to bear. Jesus had spent years preparing them for the ministry He intended for them to perform in His name. Jesus had warned them that He must go so that the Holy Spirit

342 COL Ryan F. Gonsalves, Letter to the US Army Armor Branch Association, nd. The Armor branch approved the recommendation and bestowed honors upon the chaplain on 31 July 2008.

might come and empower them for that ministry mission. Yet, upon His crucifixion Jesus’ disciples were rendered mission ineffective through fear. In their fear those disciples locked themselves into a room. When Jesus appeared to them, in their state of shock over what they had experienced, He first had to settle their nerves with the declaration, “Peace to you”.344

Soldiers facing trauma can likewise be rendered mission ineffective through fear. The chaplain, representing God in that time and place, must likewise speak the words “peace to you” through his or her actions. To do so demonstrates faith in God who “prepares a table in the presence” of one’s enemies.345 Such a chaplain, through maintaining composure, says with David, “Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.”346

When I attended the second half of the CHOBC in the summer of 2005, a story was told of an incredibly calm chaplain during the early portion of the war in Iraq. When the chaplain’s unit came under fire he decided, being a non-combatant, there was nothing for him to do until the shooting stopped or somebody was wounded. As the young Soldiers experienced the intense fear of being in combat, many for the first time, the chaplain poured himself a cup of coffee from his thermos. The demeanor of the chaplain calmed the once terrified Soldiers. The idea being that if the chaplain was so sure of the situation he could drink a cup of coffee, then they would certainly be alright.347

344 Luke 24:36; John 20:19

345 Psalm 23:5

346 Psalm 27:3

347 Although I have found other chaplains who are familiar with this story, I have not been able to determine the identity of the chaplain in the story.
Sergeant First Class Bill Stiles told me of his chaplain’s composure under fire. While on patrol in Iraq Stiles’ vehicle started taking hits from small-arms fire. The unit chaplain was in Stiles’ vehicle. “I grabbed my M4 and tried to hand my 9 Mil to the chaplain. He refused it and said he would pray. I asked him if he would be willing to pray with the pistol in his hand but he just waved it off and continued in his prayers. I couldn’t believe it. I could not do what you guys do – I won’t go outside the wire without a weapon. You must really believe that God is watching over you.”

From composure under fire to maintaining composure during the traumas that ensue the chaplain’s personal presence has an effect on how people view their circumstances. In the letter by COL Gonsalves the chaplain’s steady performance of ministry was praised. In the earlier chapter on actual experiences, note was made of the repeated use of the term “rock” and “anvil” to describe the chaplain who maintained his composure during their units’ darkest moments. The Soldiers praised chaplains capable of bringing calm to chaotic situations. The contributing medical personnel remarked on the value of chaplains who can calmly enter the treatment room and become part of the team bringing healing to the traumatized. Dr Harold Koenig of Duke University gives a list of ten reasons a chaplain is in a traumatic environment. Among the reasons listed is the traumatized person’s “need to

348 SFC Bill Stiles, interview 03 November 2010.
349 The M4 is the current carbine variant within the M16 family of battle rifles. The 9Mil is the M9 standard issue sidearm chambered in 9 millimeter.
350 CHBOLC Presentaion: Dr. Harold Koenig, Associate professor of Psychiatry, Duke University, says there are 10 reasons why a chaplain are placed in a traumatic environment. A need to make sense of the illness/injury; A need for purpose and meaning in the midst of illness/injury; A need for spiritual beliefs to be acknowledged, respected, and supported; A need to transcend the illness/injury and the self; A need to feel in control and give up control; A need to feel connected and cared for; A need to acknowledge and cope with the notion of dying and death; A need to forgive and be forgiven; A need to be thankful in the midst of illness/injury; A need for hope.
transcend the illness/injury and the self”. With the anxiety aroused by injury there needs to be someone who embodies the message that:

    God is our refuge and strength,
    a very present help in trouble.
    Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
    though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.
“Be still, and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!”
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.  

The chaplain is there to be one who brings the message of God’s provision of refuge to the wounded and dying Soldier. The Soldier’s earthly war may still be raging; the weapons of the enemy may still be fully functional; he or she may feel as if the earth is giving away. Even so, the chaplain who maintains his or her composure, thereby demonstrating a priestly presence confident in Lord, offers hope in the refuge of God and inspires the spirit of the Soldier to hear God say, “peace be still”. “Chaplains bring the traditional care of the prophet, priest, and pastor to the Army. Providing pastoral care, chaplains help soldiers cope with the stress and trauma of combat.”

6.4.2 Give Them Something Tangible

God, who is understood to be omnipresent and infinite, allowed His unique presence with the people of Israel, in their finite senses, to be known to them through tangible means. During the exodus from Egypt, God went before the people

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351 Psalm 46:1-2, 9-11

of Israel as a pillar of smoke and fire during day and night.\textsuperscript{353} Additionally, there is
the Ark of the Covenant, and upon it the mercy where God promises to meet with
and speak to His people.\textsuperscript{354} Furthermore, there was “the bread of the Presence”
which “was in some way a special symbol of Yahweh present with his people”\textsuperscript{355}

When I gave a Soldier in my unit a medallion that had an image of St George
on one side and the 1st Cavalry Division patch on the other, he told me that he would
always have it with him. At any time in the future, I could ask to see it and he
would be able to show it to me. He then proceeded to pull out his dog tags and
added the medallion to others he had accumulated. A previous chaplain had given
one; another was from his grandmother; he added the one I gave to them – all of
which he intended to wear from then on.

When I gave a different Soldier a similar medallion, he asked me if it had
been blessed. When I said no, he handed it back and asked that I bless it. Not being
keen to bless things rather than people, I took the medallion in my hands and asked
God’s blessing upon the Soldier and that He make the medallion a tangible and
constant reminder of that blessing. With that, the Soldier beamed, took the
medallion and attached it to his dog tag chain.

Soldiers, as my commander so rightly commented, want something to carry
into battle. Some have faith, some do not, but nearly all want some item that reflects
the presence or blessing of God. The sheer volume of materials given away attests
to this fact. In-turn, Chaplains are the conduit of these materials from those who

\textsuperscript{353} Exodus 13:21-22

\textsuperscript{354} Exodus 25:10-22

\textsuperscript{355} Exodus 25:30; John I. Durham, \textit{Word Biblical Commentary: Exodus}, vol. 3 (Dallas:
donate them or the official supply channels to the Soldiers who want them. This is a simple reality. Some chaplains, particularly those from more sacramentally inclined denominations, are happy to receive and distribute the various articles of faith. Others are less enthusiastic and may only place them in an area accessible to the Soldiers where those who want the items can take them. There is valid concern that the Soldier who asked for a cross, a rosary, or a pocket size Bible is simply looking for a God approved good luck charm. However, there is also the reality of many Soldiers of faith who desire emblems and articles of their faith during the trials of combat, particularly combat trauma.

Some feel that the chaplain who is concerned about the giving of these items should refrain from doing so. This is certainly within the chaplain’s prerogative. It can come at certain costs, however. This can be seen as not supporting the Soldiers when in fact the chaplain is, in his or her understanding, wishing to guard the Soldier against error. The more likely cost is lost opportunity. When the chaplain is out and about giving things to Soldiers, conversations arise. When the chaplain is giving away things reflective of faith, faith centered conversations are facilitated. Furthermore, the chaplain not providing these items does not mean the Soldier will not get them. When Soldiers procure items on their own, chaplains lose the chance of using the situation to develop a faith conversation. Similar to Laing’s assessment of participating in generalized ceremonies and prayer for the sake of having opportunities with Soldiers that can be further developed in a different venue rather than rejecting the opportunities out-of-hand, chaplains, by being the source of materials the Soldiers desire, open doors to ministry that may otherwise closed.

Chaplain Epps gives this example:
I do not know where my Soldier got his first bottle of Holy Water from. I know that he and the Soldiers he patrolled with kept it in their HUMVEE near the instrument panel between the driver and truck commander. One day that vehicle was hit by an IED and completely destroyed. All the Soldiers inside the vehicle survived without injury as did the plastic bottle, with its small cross that was printed on its side, filled with water. One of the Soldiers came in to my office giving incredible testimony to the power of the Holy Water and asking for more to give to other Soldiers. I had a choice, I could say that the water had nothing to do with his survival and dismiss his request, or I could tell him about the power of the one who saved him and his buddies. I chose to give him some water and use this as an opening for a conversation about incredible power of God, the one who had made the water he praised.  

Moving from various items designed by people to reflect the faith of the bearer, there are those tangible gifts given to the faithful by Jesus himself. The chaplain’s greatest ministry of “give them something tangible” is surely the provision of the sacraments. On multiple occasions, a Soldier who desired the Eucharist awakened me in the night in order to receive. The trauma of combat action often prompted this “I cannot wait” desire. One morning during my deployment, another Soldier entered my office and asked if he could have a “Daily Bread”. Thinking he was asking for one of the pocket sized devotional guides, I told that he could and to help himself. The Soldier went to the storage shelf, reached up to a jar of unconsecrated hosts, took one out, and consumed it. He then turned to me and said, “Thank you, now I am ready to face the day.” Personally, when I was steadily ministering to the seemingly unending stream of wounded and dead my battalion suffered in the spring and summer of 2007, I would retreat when opportunity arose to pray and receive the Eucharist. The strength provided through this tangible gift given by Jesus was essential for my ability to continue.

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357 “Daily Bread” is the name of the daily devotional by RBC Ministries.
Finally, chaplains should be aware that God has demonstrated that He will act through physical items (in addition to the sacraments) to bring about the strengthening of faith and personal healing. In Acts, the handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul’s skin were carried away to the sick and those sick were healed.\textsuperscript{358} This is not to say the vast array of items desired by Soldiers and given by chaplains (whether enthusiastically or reluctantly) are endued with the power of God. This is also not to say chaplains should be forced to perform this particular ministry function if it violates their doctrinal standards. It is to say that the chaplain should accept the reality that God has proven Himself, in the sacraments, sympathetic to our need for tangible signs of His presence with us.

God has demonstrated that He will bring about both physical and spiritual realities through physical items He chooses to use for His purposes. The chaplain should therefore not automatically dismiss the possibility of God using some emblem of faith given to a Soldier to work spiritual, if not physical, realities in the life of that Soldier. Ultimately, the best form of giving Soldiers something tangible is the next ministry function, physically be with Soldiers and “Share the Burden”.

6.4.3 Share in the Burden

Gen A.O. Conner told a class of graduating chaplains:

Your first and most important step [as a chaplain] is associating yourself closely with your troops. Thus can be done most effectively by participating in the things that they are doing, and that means…getting into the field with them. It means identifying yourself with their…programs. You must share

\textsuperscript{358} Acts 19:12
their misery, their burdens, their victories, and their defeats, and be one of them.\footnote{359}

I mentioned earlier the fallacy of the simplistic application of a “ministry of presence” that allows the chaplain to do nothing more than arrive in the midst of Soldiers and claim to have done ministry. I promote in its stead a ministry of “intentional presence”. Chaplains exercising a ministry of intentional presence are actually in the lives of the Soldiers they shepherd rather than just being where they live. This ministry of intentional presence results in the development of credibility with the Soldiers the chaplain serves.\footnote{360}

“Chaplains receive the highest praise when they unnecessarily put themselves into dangerous situations among warriors, when they risk and sometimes lose their lives helping the wounded and administering last rites while under fire.”\footnote{361} One such chaplain is Fr Charles Watters who went into battle to tend the wounded and dying. “It was his investment of his life and that he must be with his men…when the battle raged and the wounded were lying on the field, repeatedly he risked his life to bring them in and to give them help.”\footnote{362} Watters was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, the United States highest military decoration, for his service “above and beyond the call of duty” that day. Years later Soldiers continued to give testimony to the effect Watters’ ministry had on them. “It was the one man’s


\footnote{361} Jones and Beckman, 39.

investment of his profession and of himself, and that investment is still paying
spiritual dividends through the lives of the grateful me he saved."\(^{363}\)

The fact that Soldiers appreciate the presence of chaplains when they truly
share in their lives is well documented. Ackerman compiled volumes of Soldier and
chaplain interviews capturing such comments as, “I didn’t know that chaplains were
willing to share our total life”; “there were not many officers involved in living in
the bush. Our chaplain did…He cared”; “My overriding concern was to serve
somebody who was in need”; and, “My real chance for quality ministry came on the
battle field and in the hospital afterward… I could minister in Christ’s name to some
who were severely wounded and others keenly feeling the loss of their close
friends.”\(^{364}\) Chaplains practicing a ministry of intentional presence help share the
burden. They are, at their best, ministering in persona Christi.\(^{365}\) In effect, this is an
extension of what Jesus started at the incarnation. In the person of Jesus, the Word
became flesh and dwelt among us.\(^{366}\)

For some the in persona Christi terminology and that of priesthood in
general, has a specific sacramental implication. “Now for the communication of
faith and the celebration of the sacraments of faith ministers are needed. For Thomas
[Aquinas] such ministers act in persona Christi, playing Christ’s part or role on the
visible, public stage of the Church… [and] that, precisely as the authorised
dispensers of Word and sacraments, the ordained ministry enjoys an eschatological

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\(^{363}\) Hyatt; Ackerman, 171.

\(^{364}\) Ackerman, 168-170.

\(^{365}\) In the person of Christ.

\(^{366}\) John 1:14
efficacy, opening the gates of heaven.” For chaplains coming from those denominations that ascribe to this particular understanding of sacerdotal priestly ministry, it is important to explore the possibility of a wider application of the principle. Many chaplains, from the non-sacramental denominations, are more comfortable restricting themselves to using the “in Christ’s name” language as used by last chaplain above quoted by Ackerman.

Regardless of the preferred position, sacramental or non, each is too restrictive in this regard. Chaplains need to realize that the Bible teaches a much broader understanding. As Christians, we are in the body and are the body of Christ. Teresa of Avila (1515–1582) reflects on this fact in her poem, “Christ has No Body”:

    Christ has no body but yours,  
    No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
    Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
    Compassion on this world,  
    Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
    Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
    Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
    Yours are the eyes, you are his body.  
    Christ has no body now but yours,  
    No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
    Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
    compassion on this world.  
    Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

While this principle of being the person of Christ on Earth is equally true of all Christians, chaplains are specifically tasked with representing God to the Soldiers

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368. Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 6:15, 12:12, 12:27; Ephesians 5:30

369. English translations available on multiple websites including, http://www.journeywithjesus.net/PoemsAndPrayers/Teresa_Of_Avila_Christ_Has_No_Body.shtml
they serve. Assuming a legitimate call to chaplain ministry, the Army chaplain, in that unique tasking, can echo the words of Paul and claim an “authority, which the Lord gave for building [Soldiers] up”.\textsuperscript{370} Paul validates the reality that although all Christians represent Christ, there is a special commissioning and sending of some to be His representatives in specific areas of influence assigned by God.\textsuperscript{371}

When the world was burdened under the weight of sin, God did not decree, “Come to me”. Conversely, Jesus left all of the comforts, privileges, and benefits of being within the Kingdom of Heaven. He took on the tent of flesh, endured the hardships, deprivations, temptations, and the physical frailties of humanity in order to take away the burden. Likewise, chaplains who set aside opportunities of comfort, safety, and privilege in order to endure the hardships and deprivations of the Soldiers they serve, place themselves in a position to help alleviate the burden pointing the Soldier to God.\textsuperscript{372} Such chaplains can say,

\begin{quote}
But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.\textsuperscript{373}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{370} 2 Corinthians 10:8

\textsuperscript{371} 2 Corinthians 10:13-18

\textsuperscript{372} There is a display at the US Army Chaplain Corps Museum of chapel furniture handmade by the Soldiers in one chaplain’s unit while fighting in the South Pacific during WWII. The chaplain, a Roman Catholic priest, needed a tabernacle for the reservation of consecrated elements. The Soldier who made it, made it to be a perfect scale replica of the troop tents in which they lived. Christ was not believed to be in a special place unlike the Soldiers but rather in the exact same situation as the Soldiers – living with and like them, a testimony to the chaplain’s incarnational ministry among his Soldiers.

\textsuperscript{373} 2 Corinthians 4:7-12
Paul wrote to the Romans that his ministry to the Gentiles was “to be a minister of Christ Jesus…in the priestly service of the Gospel of God”.

Recognizing the common understanding of priestly ministry as bringing people to God and God to people, this function of Paul resonates perfectly with the US Army Chaplain Corps’ claim about itself, “Chaplains bring Soldiers to God and God to Soldiers”.

Although some chaplains, particularly those of the various Free Church denominations, may resist a priesthood model of ministry, there is no reason for such concern. Jesus remains the “Great High Priest” as described in Hebrews and yet, “a Christian priesthood was established in the Church”. Christians then, as a whole, are a “royal priesthood” and a “kingdom of priests”. This is not to be mistaken with the clericalist position that separates the “priesthood of the ordained from the priesthood of the church”. Rather, it affirms that the chaplain, who is a representative of the priesthood of believers, makes the person of Christ present in the lives of Soldiers based on the area of influence assigned by God.

Paul further explained to the Romans that it was not his own work but “what Christ has accomplished through [him] to bring the Gentiles to obedience”. There seems to be implication of this continued priestly work in support of the completed work of Christ when Paul states he is suffering in his flesh and is “filling up what is

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374 Romans 15:14
376 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6
378 Romans 15:16
lacking in Christ’s afflictions”. As Paul continues it is clear that he is not speaking of a need for further atoning sacrifice. Instead, through his sufferings, Paul is ministering “to make the word of God fully known”. Paul thereby makes the truth of his faith real through the works of suffering on behalf of others, enabling his credible sharing of the Gospel. This suffering with those to whom you minister to make credible your Gospel message explained by Paul in his epistle to the Colossians, is still, as testified to by the Ackerman research as well as the interviews conducted for this thesis, an effective way of making Christ’s presence real to the Soldiers a chaplain serves.

None of this is to infer that the chaplains are somehow superhuman and can thereby absorb all of their Soldiers’ burdens or answer all of their problems. Gregory the Great commented on the incarnation explaining, “that the Word was made flesh not by losing what he was but by taking what he was not”. Inversely, the chaplain acting in the person of Christ, tabernacling among His people, does not overcome human weakness and frailty. Remember the advice of Mitchell, “Please do not go into this acting on the notion that you have an answer for reasons unexplained. Do not try to justify death.” What the chaplain can do is be with those Soldiers as they face their problems and try to make sense of death that seems to have no reasonable explanation. The Very Rev’d Dr Peter Moore addressed the incoming class of Trinity School of Ministry with an explanation of cruciform ministry. He began with an illustration of a young man who went against his

379 Colossians 1:24

380 Quoted in Joel C. Elowsky, John 1-10, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture NT, vol 4a (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 43.

381 Peter Moore, “The Cruciform Shape of True Ministry” convocation address, Trinity School of Ministry, 07 September 2007.
mothers wishes that he become a brain surgeon, to “keep a lot of people from dying” and “make a lot of money” because, as he explained to his mother, “I do not want to keep people from dying; I want to show them how to live”. Moore explained that “Christian ministry has a cruciform shape: … confronting the powers of evil in ways infinitely greater than our personal and private lives; As we experience the listening ear of God… we are empowered to proclaim to others that God really is there for them.”

Chaplains, sharing in the lives of Soldiers, help take away the burden not by absorbing it in within themselves. Instead, by acting in the broad understanding of in persona Christi, they allow transference of the burden from the Soldier through the chaplain to Jesus. Chaplains may not stop people from dying, but when they share the Soldiers burden, they can show them how to live in Christ.

6.5 Chaplaincy Concerns

6.5.1 Training and Qualifications

All of these issues bring pressure to bear upon the training chaplains receive. How can the chaplain corps best prepare its chaplains for combat trauma ministry? As indicated in the materials already covered, this is not just a matter of teaching mechanical actions. Unlike other Army training, training for trauma ministry cannot be assessed by running down a checklist of subordinate tasks and deeming the chaplain a “go at this station”.382

382 Typical Army training tasks are designated by their “Terminal Learning Objective” (TLO) which is supported by a series of “Enabling Learning Objectives” (ELO’s). When Soldiers go to a testing station to prove they have learned a task to standard each ELO subtask must be performed correctly. If they are then the TLO is considered trained and the Soldier gets a “Go,” a passing mark, for the task.
Chaplain training for combat trauma ministry needs to take into account the theology and doctrine incoming student chaplains have in regard to combat, suffering, death, and their own sense of pastoral identity and purpose. These factors are shaped by the chaplain’s own education, experience, and denomination’s teaching/doctrine. To dictate a particular way of looking at any of these factors and any subsequent ministry actions the chaplain might perform in the face of trauma would cross the line of establishment and violate the 1st Amendment of the US Constitution. Still, because all of these factors vary from one chaplain to the next, and therefore so do the chaplain’s actions, it is in the Chaplain Corps’ best interest to develop some form of training during which these matters are explored.

Chaplain Miller believes that Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) should be required of all new chaplains and that the CPE they attend must have a trauma component. “The trauma experience is crucial. If they don’t experience trauma in their CPE it should not count.”\(^{383}\) This seems like it could be a working solution to the problem. CPE is designed to make people examine their own theology while trying to minister to other people in their times of need. Many denominations in the United States require their prospective ministers to complete at least one unit of CPE as part of their ordination preparation for the very purpose of examining and testing their theological beliefs. When well supervised this process of structured ministry with self and peer review provides an excellent means of ministerial development.\(^{384}\)

CPE has its critics however. “Concerns over the loyalty of CPE supervisors to the faith are common.”\(^{385}\) Evangelicals are particularly concerned that “some

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\(^{383}\) CH Miller, interview 14 October 2010.

\(^{384}\) Laing, 273-274.

\(^{385}\) Laing, 272.
CPE programs appear antagonistic to evangelical theological sensibilities. Additionally, there is real concern within some denominations that sending their ministers to CPE programs will expose them “to the influence of false teachers.” For these reasons and others, many more denominations do not require CPE as an ordination requirement. The endorsers representing denominations with the concerns just described will not tolerate making CPE an endorsement requirement for potential chaplains. An argument can even be made that such a requirement would violate the free exercise clause of the 1st Amendment because the theological position of the CPE supervisor may not agree with, or even run counter to, that of the minister. This is unlike the defensible requirement that all potential chaplains hold an MDiv from an accredited school because each is able to attend the school of their choosing where the doctrinal positions of the faculty are known.

Suggestions for preparing chaplains for combat trauma related many ideas. From officers, there was the idea to study vignettes, a methodology frequently used in Army training. There was also the strong suggestion for practical exercises and hands on training. What makes training for trauma particularly difficult is that trauma cannot be adequately simulated. Chaplain Kanter remarked in frustration about his training, “I did not feel any stress; there was no true urgency; everyone knew that the ‘wounded’ and the ‘dead’ were just fine and resting comfortably.”

Other trauma related training options that can be considered for use within the Army chaplaincy are Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) by International Critical Incident Stress

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386 Laing, 274.

387 Laing, 275.

388 Chaplain Ben Kanter, interview 26 July 2011.
Foundation, the materials and training available from the Figley Institute, and Traumatic Event Management (TEM) developed within the US Army Medical Center and School. Each of these resources provide quality materials and training and can be useful for the purpose of understanding the emotional dynamics of trauma. However, they are secular models and therefore will not be a complete resource for the Chaplain Corps as it looks to ensure the most comprehensive training possible for its chaplains.

Acknowledging that the Bill of Rights created tightrope between free exercise and establishment, the Chaplain Corps needs to develop a method of placing the student chaplain and his or her theology in “the crucible of human suffering” that it might be tested. Otherwise that theology may just “go missing” during times of traumatic injury and death in a combat environment, putting the chaplain at risk of becoming mission ineffective. Recommendations to meet this end will be provided in the next chapter.

6.5.2 Care for Chaplains – Self and Supervisory

In the Chaplain Basic Officer’s Leadership Course, student chaplains write for themselves a spiritual fitness plan. This is a minor assignment of a mere few pages and without significant input as to content from the cadre. When I went through the basic course, my essay for this requirement was a meager explanation that I would read the Bible, pray, and try to find a senior chaplain mentor. All of these are good activities, but were not presented in such a way as to indicate how they were to assist my resiliency, help me cope with the reality of combat or caregiver fatigue. The cadre did not ask the question of how my faith would

respond to challenge, how what I planned to do would mitigate the effects of the challenge, and I never explored such concepts. My assignment received a passing mark, as did everyone else’s. It was, at least when I went, a “check the box” event. We were required to do the assignment, but there was not any indication of a minimum standard of content or quality. In speaking with recent CHBOLC graduates, there does not seem to be a change in the priority or purpose of this assignment.

This lack of depth in the training is unacceptable. The Chaplain Corps knows that incredible demands will be placed upon the chaplains it trains. The reality of caregiver fatigue is well documented and recognized among clergy as well as it is in the medical field and other “helping professions”. “Historically, pastors are caretakers. We need to be needed. And in that sense, perhaps we’re all a little codependent, making caregiving an emotional hazard of our profession.” Time to spend in refreshing and renewal are critical to maintain the effectiveness of the chaplain. Yet, it receives no prioritization during student chaplains’ initial training. Again, this may be to prevent the appearance of establishing one method of spiritual self-care over another. There is a constant watch against imposing what may seem to be one set of theological priorities over another to guard against such an appearance. The value of strictly guarding free exercise rights is laudable, but at what cost? The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are in their tenth year. The chaplaincy now has a significant number of chaplains experiencing PTSD and crises of faith. Some, like Benimoff, are very public about that reality while many more suffer silently.

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Theologically, among Christians, there is clear support for spending time in personal renewal. Foremost, God the Father gives example in His day of rest after creation.\(^\text{391}\) God then commanded that we His people follow that example of taking a day’s rest in Sabbath.\(^\text{392}\) Jesus called His disciples to rest when the pressures of ministry mounted.\(^\text{393}\) When the pressure of His impending crucifixion mounted, Jesus took His disciples, went to the garden and prayed.\(^\text{394}\) As servants of Jesus, we cannot be greater than our master.\(^\text{395}\) Jesus demonstrated His practice of personal times of quiet retreat and prayer. As His servants, chaplains should do no less to be refreshed and to prepare for trials.

Beyond the biblical example, there is scientific impetus for spending time in spiritual self-care. In *How God Changes Your Brain*, the results of neuroscience research demonstrates that emotional and physical health benefits come from sustained times of prayer, meditation, and contemplation.\(^\text{396}\) These activities cannot be done without stopping the busyness of the day and spending time being refreshed. Chaplain self-care is not a question of if it should be done. It is matter of ensuring chaplains have the means to execute a spiritual self-care plan and take the time to do so.

The need for quality pastoral care from supervisors raises a different challenge. The first is the differing priorities and means of renewal each person has.

\(^\text{391}\) Genesis 2:1-3

\(^\text{392}\) Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15

\(^\text{393}\) Mark 6:31-32

\(^\text{394}\) Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:32-41; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1

\(^\text{395}\) John 13:16, 15:20

These can be both personality (e.g. extrovert versus introvert) and theologically driven. How, for example, does the supervisory chaplain who finds high-energy activities refreshing and wants all of his or her subordinates to participate in a retreat filled with action oriented activities and group participation relate to the chaplain who wishes for silence, prayer, and the contemplative reading of scripture?

Beyond the theological and personality question, there is an official obstacle to quality pastoral care from supervisors. Because a chaplain’s supervisor is that chaplain’s rater and that rater’s evaluation report of the chaplain will affect his or her career, chaplains tend to be guarded around their supervisory chaplains concerning personal issues and struggles. Additionally, due to leadership needs, a supervisory chaplain cannot grant privileged communication protections to the chaplains he or she supervises. This means chaplains who are willing to approach their supervisory chaplains with pastoral care concerns are not provided the assurance their information will be held in confidence.

For chaplains to remain mission/ministry effective they must engage in spiritual self-care and senior chaplains must establish a methodology for providing quality pastoral care to subordinates. How that can be done will be explored in the next chapter.

6.5.3 Combat Exposure Effects, Soul Care, and PTSD

Historical experience has demonstrated that the effects of combat trauma last much longer than the traumatic event itself. This reality brings implications for an Army chaplain’s role relating to traumatic injury and death in a combat

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environment. Questions the chaplain should consider include: How will the Soldier respond to combat exposure? How will the exposure affect the Soldier over time? How will a Soldier’s faith influence the impact of those responses both immediate and long-term?

“Courage is really fear that’s said its prayers.”

General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson spoke of his faith in battle saying, “My religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed….That is the way all men should live, and then all would be equally brave.”

Or, from the perspective of an old US Army recruiting advertisement, “Courage is being afraid and doing what needs to be done anyway.” In reality, Soldiers will largely do what needs to be done in spite of their fears. Some will gain this ability through assurances their faith affords them. Others will force themselves through the fear, motivated by such factors as patriotism, loyalty to comrades, fear of failure that is greater than fear of injury, and a host of other factors. Faith or no faith, whether motivated internally or externally to complete the mission at hand, Soldiers will complete the mission they are given. The majority will only later take significant stock of the questions combat action raises.

The Soldier motivated by exhortations based on Old Testament “Holy War” theology or Romans chapter 13 “destruction of evil” messages will eventually ask themselves about the righteousness of killing. Those that have never considered theological implications of war will also face the questions of killing’s eternal effects. “When you have killed another human being, when you have watched the

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399 Quoted in Tsouras, 329.
mystery of life and death flicker in front of your eyes, and a living, breathing person has become a piece of meat, and you are the one that caused that, you cannot help but think, ‘I’m going have to answer to my maker for what I did.’”

Chaplain (Major) Harry Abbott expressed his concern for Soldiers after their exposure to combat trauma. “War will always change a soldier, for he understands emotional strain and stress, hardships and temptations, and his character and strength largely determine whether he will be able to emerge triumphantly, or whether he will disintegrate and become mentally defective.” In his observation of Soldiers in combat, Abbott notes that they have their own philosophies of life and methods of dealing with “danger, disappointment, and despair”. His experience included many Soldiers turning to faith as a means of guidance and comfort. Additionally, among them were “mental and moral casualties of war” in need of assistance from chaplains and other “various humanitarian agencies”. Army chaplains can assist Soldiers to “overcome their hardness, their cynicism, and their bitterness, by instilling in them a new courage, increased faith, and a deeper understanding”.

Abbott closes his comments on the Christian obligation to Soldiers’ well-being after combat trauma. “These men must be reached…or they will be lost…[we] cannot afford to fail, for the period following the war will be a testing

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400 Grossman, On Combat, 350-351.


402 Abbott, 123.

403 Abbott, 124.

404 Abbott, 124.
period for the churches…they will prove their proper place or they will be avoided by the veterans.”

Chuck Henderson, civilian PTSD counselor, indicates that there is a wounding of the soul that occurs in combat that must be healed to alleviate the emotional suffering a Soldier feels after combat trauma. This healing can occur after the fact, but immediacy is advantageous. “The longer you wait to heal the damage the more difficult it is to heal… A chaplain who can be there right away and help a Soldier can significantly reduce the post traumatic stress response.”

Henderson stresses that it is important “to bring grace into the situation…valid answers may be true but they are not helpful if the Soldier still feels guilt or shame”.

Chaplains need to be ready to meet the questions that try the soul of Soldiers. If a Soldier has “to lawfully kill…and all they know is ‘thou should not kill’ [the Soldier’s] lawful act might cause [him or her] great mental and spiritual harm”. The chaplain must be ready to provide a more thorough understanding of God’s commands and provide care to restore the damaged soul.

In the next chapter, Application and Recommendations, I will identify application of the research to my practice of ministry, recommendations to US Army chaplain colleagues, and recommendations to the US Army Chaplain Corps.

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405 Abbott, 124.

406 Chuck Henderson, interview 03 August 2011.

407 Henderson.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion: Application and Recommendations

Faithful to God we’re serving
On the battlefields today
Embracing the cause of righteousness,
We’re marching on our way.

Onward we go till victory is won
For Justice and Right
The legions of light
The Soldiers of God, march on."\(^{409}\)

7.1 The Purpose and Structure of the Conclusion

Like many a college “fight song,” the Chaplain Corps' theme extols high standards without getting to the specifics of how those standards are met. The purpose of this thesis is to provide a better understanding of how the US Army chaplain, the Soldier of God, can truly be faithful to God on the battlefield today by providing valued ministry to the Soldiers of the United States who are experiencing the trauma of combat injury and death. For the Soldier of God, the US Army Chaplain, the cause of righteousness and seeking for the victory of justice and right must be rooted in the role of shepherd. The chaplain “is called to enter into the valley of the shadow with…his or her flock” and “to lead his [Soldiers] through conflict and turmoil to ‘springs of living water’.\(^{410}\)

To be useful, the knowledge gained through this research must be evaluated from two perspectives, which are indicated as questions below. In this conclusion,

\(^{409}\) “Soldiers of God” official US Army Chaplain Corps Song, 1944.

\(^{410}\) Derek Tidball, *Builders and Fools: Leadership the Bible Way* (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 141, 139.
the identified core ministry roles and chaplaincy concerns will be assessed for immediate ministry application and recommendations using these two questions. Officers and Soldiers will benefit from becoming familiar with the answers to each of these questions. By becoming familiar with the recommendations, they will have a better understanding of what to expect from their chaplains and the Chaplain Corps.

+ What guidance can be given to chaplains to improve their ability to perform (both personally and when in supervisory roles) “The United States Army Chaplain’s Role During Times of Traumatic Injury and Death in a Combat Environment”?

+ What recommendations can be made directly to the US Army Chaplain Corps to improve their programs of instruction?

Each question is subdivided into three sections.

+ Core Competencies Continuum
  - Nurture the Living
  - Care for the Wounded
  - Honor the Dead

+ Ministry Actions
  - Maintain Composure
  - Give them Something Tangible
  - Share in the Burden

+ Chaplaincy Concerns
  - Training and Qualifications
  - Care for Chaplains – Self and Supervisory
  - Combat Exposure Effects, Soul Care, and PTSD
7.2 What guidance can be given to chaplains to improve their ability to perform (both personally and when in supervisory roles) “The United States Army Chaplain’s Role During Times of Traumatic Injury and Death in a Combat Environment”?

7.2.1 Core Competencies Continuum

7.2.1.1 Nurture the Living

All chaplains should read the book, *God’s Hiddenness in Combat* by Jones and Beckman. I believe that this single volume has more value to chaplains than any other book currently on the market. Next, chaplains must be asked, “What is your theology of combat?” Chaplains need to understand that what we believe affects what we do or fail to do. Of particular interest is seeing Old Testament driven theology of war challenged and analyzed with greater theological integrity. While the CPE model suffers certain limitations that have been identified earlier, the practice of examining the theology behind what we do is a significant benefit of the program. My suggestion to my professional colleagues is for each to spend time in theological introspection. Each should examine his or her theology of combat so it will hold true in the face of death and injury instead of going missing. If it will go missing personally, it will certainly be of no value to those whom the chaplain is supposed to nurture.

Supervisory chaplains need to make these introspective questions a regular part of the mentoring process developing subordinates who are able to clearly articulate their theology of combat and how they see it shaping their ministry methodology. While careful not to overstep the bounds of

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seeming establishment, supervisory chaplains can promote a continued formal and informal education in the subjects of theodicy and Christian ethics. This continued study cannot be mandated but needs to be encouraged as a means for chaplains to be better prepared to Nurture the Living in ways that will actually nurture those who have experienced combat trauma.

Personally, I have found that Soldiers frequently have a Deuteronomic theology largely driven from an innate sense of righteousness. In explaining his abandonment of faith, one Soldier told me “The wrong guy died”. The idea that “God is good and therefore those who are good should be protected, while those who are bad are to be punished” is common. When the paradigm is violated, faith, if it existed to begin with, is challenged.

It is important for Soldiers to know that just because a person is punished does not mean the person is guilty. In a conditional syllogism, logical consequent is derived from accurate antecedents. It is a matter of confirming if \( x \) then \( y \). In the context of combat trauma ministry, Soldier reasoning, as demonstrated by Jackson, is that if God exists then the “Good” are rewarded. In this case, the Good was punished, therefore God does not exist. This affirming of the consequent, rather than the antecedent, is a logical fallacy akin to saying, if it is raining the pavement

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412 The requirement for theodicy study is for all chaplains; Christian ethics is for those chaplains from Christian denominations. For chaplains of other faith traditions, an appropriate course of study within their own faith can be substituted.

413 Sergeant First Class Aaron Jackson, interview 14 July 2011.
will be wet, because the pavement is wet it must be raining. We know this is false; there are many reasons the pavement may be wet.  

Being familiar with strong biblical examples of suffering despite personal righteousness, such as Job, allows me to nurture the living by showing the argument used against God is turned the wrong way around. In Jackson’s argument against God, I had the opportunity to describe the life of Christ. I described how it was perfect, yet Jesus died a criminal’s death. In Jackson’s sense of righteousness, this is a perfect example of how the wrong guy died. Nevertheless, Jesus did die and He died for a specific purpose: to free others. Relating this truth to Jackson allowed for two things. First, recognition that even if seemingly unjust, the death of his friend can be seen to have purpose. Second, it opened the door to discussing faith in a way that was more meaningful than it had ever been to Jackson before.

In the gaining and application of a greater understanding of the Bible’s wisdom literature and my own theology of combat, I am better able to Nurture the Living even when answers are not easy to come by in the face of combat trauma.

7.2.1.2 Care for the Wounded

Primarily, this research has reinforced the need to remain focused on ministry. There are many temptations to assist the various personnel as they do their jobs and have a tangible contribution to the effort of saving lives. To save a wounded Soldier’s life, is of course, laudable. And, in the following, I am not advocating a chaplain neglecting to provide immediate care if it will make a life, limb, or eyesight difference. However, with the full contingent of a combat unit’s

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combat lifesavers, medics, physician assistants, and medical doctors, a wounded Soldier needing to depend on the chaplain as a provider of medical care, even if right on the battlefield, is extremely rare. The chaplain needs to prioritize the one thing he or she brings to situation that, officially, no one else does. Chaplains must prioritize the presence of God in the situation regardless of how bad the circumstances seem. If chaplains enmesh themselves in the providing of physical care, they run the risk of not being with a Soldier in spiritual need.

Chaplains need to know, understand, and perform the four rules of combat wounded ministry – Do something; Be true to yourself; Do not intentionally violate the faith of the Soldier you are there to serve; and, Whatever it is you do it must bring a sense of sacred to the space.

First, as a chaplain, I must do something. This may seem self-evident, but the research indicates that many chaplains fail to do something in the midst of combat trauma. To do something means to enter into the situation and perform some type of intentional ministry. If “ministry of presence” is all a chaplain can muster, it must be a ministry of intentional presence. What this ministry function will be can vary from one situation to the next. It may be prayer; it may be holding the Soldier’s hand; it may be a rite or sacrament of the church; it may be meeting some need identified by the wounded Soldier. Regardless of what the act of ministry is, there must be ministry action.

The second rule is, I have to be true to myself. No chaplain enters the service in order to set his or her deeply held matters of faith aside. When ministering to those who are wounded, chaplains are guided by their own theological education, personal study, ministry experience, and denominational doctrines/expectations/standards. Personally, my faith does not allow me to engage
in or validate non-Christian faith practices as effective for salvation. Therefore, regardless of the faith of the wounded, I will always present myself as Christian and explain the motivation for what I do as coming from the love of Christ.

The third rule for caring for wounded is closely related to the second and provides its counter-balance. The third rule is never to intentionally violate the faith of the wounded Soldier. One cannot argue a person into heaven and pressure applied to a person at a time of trauma is not consistent with my understanding of the justification from James. A chaplain may arrive to the side of wounded Soldiers without their specific request, but once there the Soldier must desire Christian intervention or it is without value. Furthermore, if the Soldier actively holds a non-Christian faith, it is not the chaplain’s purpose to attempt to convert him or her while the medical personnel are treating the wounds. Whether a Soldier is Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, or any other faith, or no faith at all, a chaplain’s purpose is to simply be a demonstration of Christ’s concern for the world by providing what he or she can in the way of ministry. If there is not a discernible common ground where the Soldier and chaplain can meet, valid Christian ministry can still be performed by meeting needs that Jesus identified as crucial. These include being with the wounded during their time receiving care and meeting physical needs such as comfort concerns, which might be not addressed by the medical personnel in their priority of treating the wounds. 415

The fourth rule in caring for the wounded is whatever it is that I do, remaining true to myself, while not intentionally violating the conscience of the Soldier, must bring a sense of the sacred to the space. Each person responding to a trauma has a purpose. The medical personnel do their tasks, the administrative

415 Matthew 25:31-46
personnel do their tasks, and the command personnel do their tasks. Each of those tasks is crucial to the healing of the wounded and the ability to continue the mission in spite of a Soldier’s removal from the fight. Chaplains, likewise, have a specific task. The chaplain’s task is representing God in the situation. To do this may involve any of the acts of ministry delineated in the section on the need to do something. It could entail something else altogether. Whatever it is, it must convey that God cares in a way that transcends any theological differences between the wounded Soldier and the chaplain.

Next, all chaplains need to study both their own faith and denominational standards. Do not assume what you can or cannot do on behalf of another. The answers provided by endorsers indicate a broader allowance for ministry action than many chaplains realize exist for themselves. Then, a chaplain should study, even if only through a simple survey, the key tenets of other faiths. Chaplains should know where common ground exists between themselves and others, as well as existing obstacles.

7.2.1.3 Honor the Dead

As honoring the dead is a continuation of caring for the wounded, the four rules still apply. Chaplains must do something that is true to their convictions without intentionally violating any known convictions of the deceased for the purpose of bringing a sense of the sacred to the space. This is done in two ways. First is the ministry provided immediately after a Soldier dies, and second, is the memorial ceremony.

Chaplains must be aware that there are not, at least as not as much as we would like there to be, fixed answers. What a chaplain does at the time of a
Soldier’s death will vary from Soldier to Soldier and from one cause of death to another. What cannot vary is that whatever is done must honor the Soldier and honor God. The chaplain should prepare for combat trauma ministry through exploring the questions such ministry raises. What does my faith allow me to do? What does my faith mandate me to do? What does my endorser expect from me? Where, if anywhere, will I violate any of the answers I have so far in order to honor the dead in a way I believe must be done? These are questions better answered, or at least considered, before the traumatic event occurs. Furthermore, there should be an overall development of foundational skills. While not a set task list, knowing how to do basic ministry functions provides a basis from which to initiate care provided.

Regarding the Memorial Ceremony, chaplains need to make it more than an official function in their minds. This Army ritual is truly a ritual of healing for many Soldiers. Chaplains who dismiss it will, in effect, dismiss the Soldiers they serve. Showing honor to a Soldier who has given his life for the cause of his country is the right thing to do. Chaplains are supposed to do the right thing. Demonstrating that the Chaplain cares will allow more direct ministry opportunities to those living with the burden of grief and loss.

7.2.2 Ministry Actions

7.2.2.1 Maintain Composure

Composure is emphasized over other things the chaplain may want to prioritize. As mentioned earlier, the temptation to do tangible things is strong. Chaplains need to know that of all the Soldiers and officers interviewed, none mentioned a chaplain’s ability to carry litters, start IV’s, apply a tourniquet, or any of the other things many chaplains find themselves doing in an effort to consider
themselves useful. In contrast, being a calm presence in the midst of chaos made lasting impressions, enduring years after the fact.

Some chaplains may have a hard time accepting the priority of maintaining composure as an act of ministry. I have heard chaplains defend their willingness to break down in the face of the trauma by citing the fact that Jesus wept over the death of Lazarus.\textsuperscript{416} While it is true that Jesus did display the emotion of grief in this case, it was days after Lazarus’ death with the grieving family members, not in the midst of the death itself. The biblical record gives us ample examples of when the situation was chaos Jesus rebuked the storm, stopped the fights, and restored calm. A Chaplain, as Jesus’ representative, must do what he or she can to do the same. What chaplains can do is maintain their own composure. If a chaplain feels it is appropriate he or she can weep with those overwhelmed by the emotions of grief and loss after the fact, but not during.

\textbf{7.2.2.2 Give Them Something Tangible}

It is important for chaplains to be aware of the ministry opportunities that can be developed through the use of giveaway items. A large number of those serving in the chaplaincy will not object to giving out these items. For those who are opposed, an encouragement to examine their opposition in light of the scripture record acknowledged in the previous chapter is an appropriate course of action.

For those willing to give out tangible signs of faith, sources are essential. The Army supply system is one source of these items. but selection is limited and acquisitions come out of the unit budget. Chaplains need to be aware of the vast number of civilian ministry agencies, such as “On Beads of Prayer,” that donate

\textsuperscript{416} John 11:28-37
materials to chaplains to pass along to Soldiers. While this list of sources is ever changing, networking with fellow chaplains and receiving guidance from chaplaincy leadership is a good way of staying abreast of current sources.

In my personal cost to benefit analysis of giving out these items, I find the benefit of having items for Soldiers outweighs the risk of feeding superstition. It is my intent to have something to say with everything that I give away. It may be a Christ affirming story or legend behind the saint on a medallion. I can tell them the history of prayer beads and specific prayers that will affirm orthodox Christian faith to go with them. Regardless of the item, I always want to be able to get the Soldier talking with the intent of making whatever they have selected as their tangible sign of God’s blessing, rather than just a good luck charm.

7.2.2.3 Share in the Burden

The main thing I want my fellow chaplains to know is that the ministry of sharing the burden is driven by attitude, not action. To be a disciples of Jesus chaplains must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. In the chaplaincy that can be done through the denial of personal comforts and carrying a cross in the shape of a rucksack, flack vest, and helmet. Chaplains can put the findings of my research in practice by making a point of being with Soldiers where they are.

While the research is focused on the combat environment, this principle is not bound to theater of operations. Soldiers bear burdens in training as well as

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417 On Beads of Prayer, www.onbeadsofprayer.org, provides prayer beads at no charge to military chaplains for the sake of giving to service members and their families. I have personally received and given away thousands of their prayer beads.

418 Matthew 10:38, 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23, 14:27
combat. Being with Soldiers where they are is the chaplain’s task as a shepherd. Whether it is in combat or within the United States in a field training exercise, going to the range, or operations within the confines of the garrison setting, chaplains should be with Soldiers wherever they are. Effective chaplains will bring the Army value of selfless service to its fullest ministry potential by moving past programs and entering into the lives of their Soldiers.

7.2.3 Chaplaincy Concerns

7.2.3.1 Training and Qualifications

The most important guidance I can give other chaplains is to attend the Emergency Medical Ministry course. No other training available delivers such a level of experience and skill development that actually performing trauma ministry in this structured format. Supervisory chaplains should mandate the training as part of the professional development of any chaplain they supervise.

Chaplains should also be regularly engaged in professional reading and training. The sources identified earlier provide a good foundation of knowledge related to the effects of trauma and trauma intervention. The chaplain should develop that foundation and then use the knowledge to develop a ministerial view of the information. All of the secular training and materials that are available need to filtered through an evaluative lens which asks, “How can this knowledge coupled with my theology, inform how I will perform ministry during times of combat trauma?”
7.2.3.2 Care for Chaplains – Self and Supervisory

Supervisory chaplains must encourage subordinate chaplains to do their own examination of what sustains them. They should not accept a thrown together, “I’ll read the Bible and pray” plan but a true exploration of what it is about their faith that gives them strength. Then each chaplain must develop a clearly articulated plan for how to keep that spiritual nourishment flowing. Once they have a quality self-care plan, it is the supervisory chaplain’s responsibility to ensure their subordinates are adequately resourced to exercise the plan within whatever limitations may exist in the theater of operations.

The next crucial role that a supervisory chaplain has as a ministry task is to share the burden. This means being with the chaplains supervised, spending time with them, and allowing them to unload the burdens they have taken onto themselves. Whether it is actual physical assistance with a ministry function or simple support through prayer and friendship, the chaplain care role in supervision is to help bear some of the load. The challenge to this provision of care is the potential for running afoul the regulatory restrictions. To mitigate that risk each supervisory chaplain needs to encourage every chaplain to find an additional source of pastoral care outside of the chain-of-command where, if needed, privileged communication protections can be evoked.

Lastly, in both self and supervisory care, chaplains must remember that they are only sharing in burdens and helping bear the load temporarily. As one strives to take it off the one whom it has strained, he or she must seek immediately to pass it on to Christ who has already accepted the burdens of the whole world. This
transference will make true Jesus’ comment that when serving Him, the burden is light and the yoke is easy.419

7.2.3.2 Combat Exposure Effects, Soul Care, and PTSD

The US Army will be contending with PTSD caused by combat exposure with its devastating effects on Soldiers and their families for years to come. The chaplain’s role related to combat exposure will last as long. Chaplains must be encouraged to ask, “Where does God fit in the model/program/method/etc?” Then, if there is not a discernable theological underpinning ask, “If God is not part of this, is it a chaplain model or a mental health model?” If it is a mental health model, it is best left to mental health professionals with whom we can closely work as part of a treatment team. Chaplains need a Soul Care model. The TEM (Traumatic Event Management) model is good and those attending the course learn valuable skills. However, in the process of this research I realized that chaplains should not want to do TEM – Traumatic Event Management. What a chaplain needs to do is TEM – Traumatic Event Ministry. For combat exposure intervention to work as an multi-disciplinary effort those intervening must each take their own roles. This prevents redundancy of effort and promotes a full-spectrum of care. Therefore, in order to ensure the greatest effect from each person’s effort, chaplains should not try to do the same thing with the same methods as the mental health professionals.

Next, chaplains must not rely on prayerful platitudes that seem to spiritually pat the Soldiers on the head and tell them that they will be OK without providing scriptural substance to back up the claim. Finally, chaplains need to know that a

419 Matthew 11:30
combat event may have only lasted matter of seconds but the combat trauma will last indefinitely.

7.3 What recommendations can be made directly to the US Army Chaplain Corps to improve their programs of instruction?

7.3.1 Core Competencies Continuum

7.3.1.1 Nurture the Living

I recommend to the Chaplain Corps that they mandate, as part of the Chaplain Basic Officers’ Leadership Course (CHBOLC), the reading of God’s Hiddenness in Combat. Furthermore, until such date that all chaplains have read this book, each level of chaplain professional development should mandate the book as required reading. Thereby all chaplains throughout the rank structure will read it.

Next, the Chaplain Corps can improve CHBOLC with a change of focus. It currently spends its limited time with teaching what to do. Army training modality is focused on the Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO’s) and Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO’s). When the ELO’s are performed to standard, the TLO is considered trained to standard and the subject is complete. This is perfectly fine when learning how to identify terrain features on a map or other Soldier skills, but is a lacking method for teaching ministry.

To learn to Nurture the Living, chaplains need to know why we are doing what we do. The difficulty is the time required to adopt such a training focus. I believe that the Chaplain Corps would find the benefits outweigh the cost to make the change. Whether it is through lengthening the course or by reducing the number of tasks taught to remain within the current timeline, chaplains who spend the extra
time and learn how the tasks taught are actually ministry functions will be much better suited to Nurturing the Living.

7.3.1.2 Care for the Wounded

The Chaplain Corps should make the four rules of combat wounded ministry a specific portion of the training materials in CHBOLC. Furthermore, within the Chaplain Corps there are world religion “Subject Matter Experts” (SME’s). These SME’s can be used by the Chaplain Corps to provide such a survey as recommended above during the CHBOLC. Care will need to be exercised to prevent any implication that this portion of the training is for the promotion of any synchronistic intent.

7.3.1.3 Honor the Dead

The training for what do when a Soldier dies from combat trauma should be expanded. The current time given to the subject is inadequate for exploring in any depth the questions the task raises. Further, the training needs to incorporate the reality that trauma is messy and fast paced. Combat trauma ministry will never be trained to standard in a classroom. Without the stress and mess of real trauma, the classroom environment can only introduce the subject. Likewise, simulated trauma in practical exercises fails to create the stress required to test the chaplain’s ability to perform. I will detail some specific recommendations for overcoming these shortfalls later in the section on training.

As described earlier, the CHBOLC spends extensive time training for the Memorial Ceremony. The training is thorough and trains chaplains in the performing of the task admirably. My only suggestion is to incorporate some
discussion on the emotional effects of performing the ceremonies. I think this will reduce in others the experience that I had of becoming jaded. It may not prevent the feelings, but by being forewarned a chaplain could remain mindful of the response and guard against it.

7.3.2 Ministry Actions

7.3.2.1 Maintain Composure

“Have you ever seen a person that just exudes confidence under stress? You can’t fake it, it is a product of training and experience.”\textsuperscript{420} The Chaplain Corps should incorporate more stress creating activities throughout the CHBOLC. While it would be ideal to train for trauma-induced stress, the lack of ability to simulate adequately trauma prevents that. However, other forms of stress inducing training can at least prepare the chaplain for the demands of performing ministry under an externally created stress load. The best option would be to design a component of the training that actually provides opportunity to gain experience responding to trauma.

7.3.2.2 Give Them Something Tangible

This task is straightforward and needs little in the way of training. It would be advantageous for there to be time within the CHBOLC where chaplains learn of what is available directly through the supply system, what the standards are for receiving items from civilians who want to donate, and engaging in a discussion of the potential positives and negatives of giving out these tangible signs of faith. This

allows each chaplain to have opportunity to make an informed decision about what he or she wishes to do in respect to this ministry action.

7.3.2.3 Share in the Burden

I am afraid little can be done in the way of training to affect attitude. Either the chaplain wants to be in the lives of Soldiers and share their burdens or the chaplain does not. What the Chaplain Corps can do is institute more stringent screening both in the application process and during training.

Every applicant to the chaplaincy must interview with a chaplain who has attained the rank of colonel. While it can be difficult to make a detailed assessment of an applicant in the time available for interview, it seems that this first gate could be made harder to get through. Chaplains with this much experience in the Army can certainly screen out more of those who enter the chaplaincy for mercenary reasons.

The next suggestion would be a radical departure from the way chaplain training is currently conducted. The course for new chaplains should be converted to an assessment and selection process. A chaplain student who may currently be identified as not having the right attitude for chaplaincy ministry, but passes all events without committing any disciplinary violations will graduate. These chaplains will then go on to their various assignments and provide less than ideal ministry to the Soldiers they have an obligation to serve. If the Chaplain Corps changed the training program from CHBOLC to a form of Chaplain Assessment and Selection, a candidate that was mentally and physically suitable could be assessed as passing the course. At the same time, if this candidate did not demonstrate the right
attitude for chaplain ministry, the cadre could non-select the candidate and he or she would not continue in the Army.

7.3.3 Chaplaincy Concerns

7.3.3.1 Training and Qualifications

Prior to the question of the training itself, the question of whom the Chaplain Corps trains must be addressed. Christian ministry by its very nature is a matter of interacting with people. The chaplaincy takes ministers out of their own denominational confines and thrusts them into a pluralistic setting where, unlike a local parish setting, there is no expectation of faith or any claim to faith. Chaplains must be capable of interacting in that world while maintaining their ministerial identity. For these reasons, the Chaplain Corps should only select from applicants who have attended seminary in a residential status.

With the rapid expansion of education delivery methods, most accrediting agencies within the United States now allow for degrees to be completed entirely by non-residential means. These degrees and their associated transcripts do not indicate if the student completed the study as a resident or non-resident. Association of Theological Schools (ATS) is the only accepted accrediting agency that does not allow the completion of a degree as a non-resident (although one-third of the total number of credits are allowed to be non-resident). For these reasons, the Chaplain Corps should change their standard and only use ATS accredited degrees to meet entry qualifications.

By requiring an ATS accredited degree, the Chaplain Corps will also ensure that the degree plan will include a significant amount of education in biblical studies
and theology that will serve the chaplains in their need to answer from a theological perspective the questions combat trauma raises.

The Chaplain Corps should also discontinue the use of wash letters.\footnote{Those letters from an accredited seminaries stating that they will accept the work completed at an unaccredited seminary as equivalent to their own. For fuller explanation, see 4.1.2.} Applicants with degrees issued within the United States should be held to the standard of attending a seminary that meets the academically expected standards of faculty, facilities, and research capabilities needed to achieve accreditation. For those holding foreign degrees, there are government-approved agencies that evaluate international credentials for reasonable fees.\footnote{This is how I had the MTh I earned studying at Spurgeon’s College/University of Wales added to my military qualifications record.} Applicants with quality educational credentials from outside of the United States should be required to use one of these agencies to validate their degrees.

Next, I recommend the elimination of any waivers for those who lack the required length of pastoral ministry experience. The Army is not the place to develop one’s pastoral identity. In addition to actually learning how to minister through experience, requiring this experience puts the applicant in a position to develop his or her interpersonal skills. It is true that being in a classroom with other students and being in a parish with parishioners does not guarantee the development of these skills, but allowing 100 percent online education and waiving the time in a pastorate almost guarantees the lack of them.

My first recommendation specific to training provided by the Army, is that EMM should be a requisite part of the CHBOLC. Failing that, all chaplains should be required to attend the course within their first year in the chaplaincy or prior to combat deployment, whichever comes first. To implement this recommendation
will require a significant increase in the training infrastructure at the facility at Fort Sam Houston, but I believe the value added to the Chaplain Corps would be well worth the effort and expense. Another option, although not as ideal, is for the Chaplain Corps to enter into an agreement with local law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and hospitals with trauma centers allowing the placement of chaplains for experience during their time in the CHBOLC. Failing either of the above, the minimum the Chaplain Corps should do is to follow the advice of the many officers who recommended the use of vignettes and case studies as a training methodology. Students should have to examine actual combat trauma experiences and develop what their ministry course of action would be. The assignment should include anticipated actions and the theological motivation behind them.

I also believe the Chaplain Corps must incorporate a significant theological component to the CHBOLC. Because of the US Constitution’s restriction against establishment of religion, it is quite understandable why theology is actually not a major part of the course; the Army must remain vigilant to prevent the appearance of establishment. However, properly conducted, the cadre can lead discussions and assign essays that force each student to examine the theological positions they hold and their influence on their performance of ministry. In a similar vein as the CPE model, this effort would not be to establish a particular doctrinal belief by all students. Rather, it would be for the student to examine the beliefs he or she already holds. While some students may find that they need to rethink their beliefs, this additional training would be intended to force the students into a position where they actually marry their beliefs to their actions and understand the connection.
7.3.3.2 Care for Chaplains – Self and Supervisory

The portions of chaplain training that relate to spiritual self-care must be emphasized as a critical part of chaplain life. While recognizing that each person will have different points of view, ranging from radical departures from each other to nuanced shades of difference, all students need to go through the hard process of identifying the elements of faith that sustain them and making an appropriate self-care plan indicating how and why it will work for him or her.

7.3.3.3 Combat Exposure Effects, Soul Care, and PTSD

The field of Soul Care as it relates to Combat Exposure Effects (CEE) and PTSD is wide open to further research and exploration. The CEE and PTSD models that do exist are largely confined to the secular realm and those that are faith based are primarily focused on trauma from non-combat causes. The Chaplain Corps can lead the way in spiritual care for combat trauma sufferers. Rather than continuing to rely on secular models, the Chaplains Corps’ collective experience, knowledge, and vast array of theological positions should be applied to the developing Soul Care models that are sufficient in variety that chaplains can select the one or ones best aligned to their doctrinal standards. The Army Medical Command developed a good product in Traumatic Event Management. It is time the Chaplain Corps follow suit and develop quality methods of Traumatic Event Ministry.

7.4 Further Application and Further Research

Although focused on combat trauma, the application of this research is certainly not restricted to the combat environment. Chaplains in a wide variety of crisis ministry settings can certainly translate the standards of care, such as the four
rules of combat wounded ministry, to their own situations. This fact is true for many of the categories identified in the research. Application to other settings is only as limited as the chaplain’s willingness to find commonality in their experiences with those of combat chaplains.

As a field of research, combat trauma ministry is virtually untapped and trauma ministry in general is only beginning to be developed. Trauma care in the secular realm is an ever-growing field of research and mental health professionals are publishing valuable information on the subject. We live in an era where spiritual fitness is recognized as a prime component of overall personal health. Chaplains are part of the multi-disciplinary team that promotes that overall personal health. We, as ministers and theologians, need to research and publish quality materials validating the contribution of faith and the practice of ministry in the healing of those affected by times of injury and death in a combat environment.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1CD</td>
<td>1st Cavalry Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>1ID</td>
<td>1st Infantry Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>1LT</td>
<td>First Lieutenant</td>
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<tr>
<td>2LT</td>
<td>Second Lieutenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4ID</td>
<td>4th Infantry Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAR</td>
<td>After Action Report (or Review)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFCC</td>
<td>Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Area of Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Army Regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATS</td>
<td>Association of Theological Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAS</td>
<td>Battalion Aid Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>Brigadier General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTh</td>
<td>Bachelor of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Chaplain Captain Career Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>Chaplain</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHBOLC</td>
<td>Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHOBC</td>
<td>Chaplain Officer Basic Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>CISD</td>
<td>Critical Incident Stress Debriefing</td>
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<tr>
<td>CISM</td>
<td>Critical Incident Stress Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Commanding Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>COL</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Combat Outpost</td>
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<tr>
<td>COSR</td>
<td>Combat Operational Stress Reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Command Post</td>
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Appendix A - Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPE</td>
<td>Clinical Pastoral Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT</td>
<td>Captain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSC</td>
<td>Combat Stress Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSH</td>
<td>Combat Support Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOD</td>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESV</td>
<td>English Standard Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>FM</td>
<td>Field Manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOB</td>
<td>Forward Operating Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUMVEE</td>
<td>High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV), AKA HUMVEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IED</td>
<td>Improvised Explosive Device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IZ</td>
<td>International Zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSS</td>
<td>Joint Security Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIA</td>
<td>Killed in Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTC</td>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel</td>
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<tr>
<td>LTG</td>
<td>Lieutenant General</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAJ</td>
<td>Major</td>
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<tr>
<td>MASCAL</td>
<td>Mass Casualty Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDEVAC</td>
<td>Medical Evacuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDiv</td>
<td>Master of Divinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MG</td>
<td>Major General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTh</td>
<td>Master of Theology</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCO</td>
<td>Non-Commissioned Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>OOCO</td>
<td>Ongoing Overseas Contingency Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>POI</td>
<td>Program of Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td>Post Traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Regular Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>RB</td>
<td>Reference Book</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFC</td>
<td>Sergeant First Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGT</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOP</td>
<td>Standing Operating Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Specialist (Same pay as a Corporal w/o leadership responsibility)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSG</td>
<td>Staff Sergeant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STX</td>
<td>Situational Training Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWBTS</td>
<td>Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Training Circular</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEM</td>
<td>Traumatic Event Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Training Manual</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSP</td>
<td>Training Support package</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMT</td>
<td>Unit Ministry Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>USACHCS</td>
<td>US Army Chaplain Center &amp; School</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAR</td>
<td>United States Army Reserve</td>
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Hello,

For those who do not know me, I am CH (CPT) Steven Rindahl, and I am working on a Doctorate of Ministry. The degree is being pursued through Spurgeon’s College, London. My field of research is a chaplain’s ministry during times of traumatic injury and death during combat operations.

I am seeking your assistance in developing a pool of qualitative data from which I can write the dissertation. I will send a copy of the dissertation to those participating and request a copy once it is complete and successfully defended. If you want a copy, please indicate such at the end of the interview questions.

Full anonymity is guaranteed. If you wish to go on record by name you can indicate such at the end of the interview questions, otherwise I will assume you wish to remain anonymous. The following paragraph details the standards of ethical research I will follow.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance in this research.

Ethical Standards of Research

All interactions with chaplains, soldiers, and commanders will be in full compliance with ethical research methodology. Every participant will be a volunteer and enjoy complete anonymity unless he or she volunteers to go on record for quotation. Records of interviews and correspondence will be held in confidence and references to them in the dissertation will be attributed to an ascribed pseudonym. Original transcripts of interviews and questionnaires and the matrix assigning a pseudonym to each participant will be destroyed after the successful defense of the dissertation. If a person feels at anytime uncomfortable with proceeding with the interview, he or she can terminate the interview. Only persons with complete access to US military/veterans administration health care including psychological and psychiatric care will be considered for interviews. Full access to chaplaincy services will also be guaranteed to ensure any pastoral care concerns, which may arise from the interview process, will be met.

If you have access to the care described and consent to interview, please continue.
C.1 United States Army Chaplain Recruiting Standards

+ You must obtain an ecclesiastical endorsement from your faith group. This endorsement should certify that you are:

1. A clergy person in your denomination or faith group. By US Army standard, clergy must be capable of providing/celebrating the ordinances/sacraments within his denomination. Therefore, permanent deacons and other clerical offices of various denominations, which do not include this ability, do not meet the standard of this requirement.

2. Qualified spiritually, morally, intellectually and emotionally to serve as a Chaplain in the Army.

3. Sensitive to religious pluralism and able to provide for the free exercise of religion by all military personnel, their family members and civilians who work for the Army.

+ Educationally, you must:

1. Possess a baccalaureate degree of not less than 120 semester hours. A semester hour is a unit of academic credit; one hour of lecture per week for an academic semester. A semester typically is fourteen weeks in duration.

2. Possess a graduate degree in theological or religious studies, plus have earned at least a total of 72 semester hours in graduate work in these fields of study. The Master of Divinity is the most common degree plan used to meet this requirement. Most MDiv degree plans consist of 90 or more semester hours completed in a span of three-years. The MDiv previously was the Army’s minimum standard. Although it is not clear in the recruiting material on the Army website, the 72 semester hours must all be in a single degree plan and not an accumulated amount derived from combining multiple smaller degrees or adding classes to extend an otherwise shorter program. A few seminaries have developed 72 semester hour programs specifically to meet this reduced standard allowed by the Army.

+ Applicants for active duty or the National Guard MUST be U.S. citizens. Permanent residents can ONLY apply for the Army Reserve.

+ Be able to receive a favorable National Agency Security Clearance.

+ Pass a physical exam at one of our Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS).

+ A minimum of two years of full-time professional experience, validated by the applicant’s endorsing agency.
Appendix C – Chaplain Recruiting Standards

(This requirement is not applicable to Army Reserve applicants). 426

+ Must be at least 21 years of age, but younger than 45 at time of appointment. Prior service applicants with at least 3 years of prior Active Federal Service (AFS) or creditable USAR service must be younger than 47 at time of appointment. 427

C.2 Australian Army Chaplain Recruiting Standards

Age Requirement

Applicants may apply up to the age of 56 years. The compulsory retirement age for Chaplain Officers is 60 years.

Citizenship Requirement

Only Australian citizens are permitted to serve in the ADF.

If you are a Permanent Resident of Australia, the ADF may consider a temporary waiver of the citizenship requirement if the position for which you are applying cannot be filled by an applicant who meets all the citizenship requirements, and then only in exceptional circumstances. You will be required to obtain Australian citizenship as early as possible following enlistment or appointment.

More information on citizenship requirements and the citizenship waiver process is available from the Recruitment Centre and your local Defence Force Recruiting Centre.

Security Requirement

The Department of Defence requires ADF entrants to obtain a security clearance appropriate to their avenue of entry.

426 This professional experience must be in a field of vocational ministry and accumulated after the completion of educational requirements.

Appendix C – Chaplain Recruiting Standards

A process of background checks, collection of relevant information and, as required, interviews enables the Regional Security Office to make an informed assessment of an applicant’s suitability for a security clearance.

Current policy requires applicants for this particular avenue of entry to have lived in Australia for the preceding 10 years, or have a checkable background for this period.

Aptitude Requirement

The application process to join the Australian Defence Force requires you to complete a series of aptitude tests including verbal, spatial and numerical ability and a general maths test. Some jobs may also need additional testing at a later date.

Psychology support staff will explain what is involved with each test.

The aptitude tests provide information about your suitability for the Defence Force and for particular jobs. Defence Force Recruiting can then help you identify jobs that match your abilities.

Further information on the aptitude testing requirements can be found here.

Gender Restriction

Employment available for males and females.

An applicant for appointment to the Royal Australian Army Chaplain Department (RAA Ch D) is required to:

+ Be from an endorsed denomination or faith group represented within the current religious diversity of Army personnel. These denominations are currently the Anglican Church, Catholic Church, Uniting Church, Presbyterian Church, Baptist Union of Australia, Lutheran Church of Australia, Churches of Christ, Salvation Army and Council of Australian Jewry.

+ Provide documented evidence of a minimum of three years denominationally endorsed theological and ministry training;

+ Provide documented evidence of ordination or equivalent;
Appendix C – Chaplain Recruiting Standards

+ Have at least two years post-ordination pastoral ministry experience (but preference is for at least five years);

+ Have endorsement and approval from the candidate’s denomination, at the national level, that they are in good standing with their denomination and suitable representatives for Army Chaplaincy;

+ Have approval of the Army Principal Chaplain to initiate recruiting;

+ Be deemed suitable by the appropriate denominational Senior Chaplain (full-time candidates) or Regional Staff Chaplain (part-time candidates) and be endorsed by the appropriate member of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS) or Churches Advisory Committee (CAC) member (ARes); and

+ Satisfy the entry criteria applicable for Army officers.

+ To be appointed, you must be medically and physically fit for entry to your chosen occupation. This is partially assessed from the completion of an extensive questionnaire covering your medical history, followed by a physical examination.

+ You will also be required to successfully pass a physical fitness test prior to your appointment. This fitness assessment is called the Basic Fitness Assessment (BFA). The BFA consists of a 2.4 km run/walk or 5km walk (only applicable to some members), push-ups and sit-ups. The standard required will be determined by your age.

For details on medical standards refer to 'Medical Process for Entry into the ADF'.

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C.3 British Army Chaplain Recruiting Standards

In order to join the Royal Army Chaplains Department you must be a citizen of the United Kingdom or of a Commonwealth country. You must also be an ordained minister recognised by one of the Sending Churches (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist/URC/Congregational, Church of Scotland/Presbyterian, Elim or Assemblies of God) and normally have at least 3 years experience in full-time ministry. You must be medically and physically fit and normally have resided continuously in the United Kingdom for the 5 years immediately prior to your application and be within the age requirements. The upper age limit on joining is currently 52, but likely to be lowered to 49 in the next couple of years.

Should you meet these initial requirements, there follows a selection process. This involves endorsement by your respective Sending Church and an Acquaint Visit to an Army unit with serving chaplains. There are mandatory security and medical checks and clearances and it is only when these are completed that a candidate may be put forward for the Army Officers Selection Board (AOSB), based at Westbury and managed by the Chaplain-General.

If you are successful you will undergo training at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre (AFCC) at Amport House and will attend the Professionally Qualified Course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. (The course runs for 4 weeks with doctors, dentists, vets, nurses and lawyers also training.) You will then be posted to your first unit.429

C.4 Canadian Military Chaplain Recruiting Standards

Admission Requirements

+ Must be an ordained minister, a Roman or Eastern Catholic Pastoral Associate or a religious leader mandated by a nationally registered faith group

+ Must receive approval from a representative of the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy

Appendix C – Chaplain Recruiting Standards

(ICCMC), the endorsement of the ICCMC and be selected by the Chaplain General

+ Must have a Master of Divinity preparing for ministry or equivalent

  o The Master of Divinity is a university degree accredited by a Province or Territory of Canada and recognized by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
  o The Faith Group is the final authority setting the minimum standards for pastoral ministry in its religious jurisdiction
  o For candidates of Academic institutions from outside Canada, a recognized Canadian University determined by the ICCMC must conduct a prior learning assessment

+ Must have at least 2 years of supervised experience in a civilian ministry

Hello,

My name is Steven Rindahl and I am a chaplain in the US Army. You are being contacted as chaplain endorser to the US military. I am currently working on a DMin dissertation (Spurgeon’s College, London – [www.spurgeons.ac.uk](http://www.spurgeons.ac.uk)). The subject is “The United States Army Chaplain’s Role During Times of Traumatic Injury and Death in a Combat Environment.” I wish to include a section on the standards set by and expectations of the various endorsers. It would be very helpful if you would please take some time to fill in the questions below. I will provide a copy of the dissertation, after it is successfully defended, to anyone who assists in this research and requests a copy.

blessings,

CH (CPT) Steven G Rindahl, MDiv MTh
Chief, Dept of Ministry and Pastoral Care
Moncrief Army Community Hospital
Ft Jackson, SC

[steven.rindahl@us.army.mil](mailto:steven.rindahl@us.army.mil) (official)
[AbnChap@sc.rr.com](mailto:AbnChap@sc.rr.com) (personal)

What is the official name of your denomination/endorsing agency?

What is your minimum educational requirement (ie. Traditional 90+ sh MDiv, shorter MDiv, other Master’s program, etc) for chaplains?

Do you allow “wash letters” and if so, under what circumstances?

Please detail your requirement for local congregation/vocational ministry experience:

Do you ever waive that requirement and if so under what circumstances?

Do you have any requirements or expectations that those you endorse have experience or training in trauma ministry? If so what are they?

Please describe any denominational/theological expectations of what your chaplains should do in times of traumatic injury and death of a Soldier:
APPENDIX D – Request for Information from Endorsers

Please describe anything that a chaplain could do or fail to do during the time of traumatic injury and death of a Soldier, which would cause you to consider revoking the chaplain’s endorsement:

Please add any additional information you feel will assist me in having a greater understanding as to how the chaplains you endorse are to perform trauma ministry:

Please indicate if you are open to follow-on questions and your preferred means of contact:
A Master of Divinity (MDiv)

A.1 Purpose of the degree

A.1.0 The Master of Divinity degree is the normative degree to prepare persons for ordained ministry and for general pastoral and religious leadership responsibilities in congregations and other settings. It is the required degree for admission to the Doctor of Ministry degree program, and the recommended first theological degree for admission to advanced programs oriented to theological research and teaching.

A.2 Primary goals of the program

A.2.0 The goals an institution adopts for an MDiv degree should take into account knowledge of the religious heritage, understanding of the cultural context, growth in spiritual depth and moral integrity, and capacity for ministerial and public leadership.

A.3 Program content, location, and duration

A.3.1 Content

A.3.1.0 The MDiv program should provide a breadth of exposure to the theological disciplines as well as a depth of understanding within those disciplines. It should educate students for a comprehensive range of pastoral responsibilities and skills by providing opportunities for the appropriation of theological disciplines, for deepening understanding of the life of the church, for ongoing intellectual and ministerial formation, and for exercising the arts of ministry.

A.3.1.1 Religious heritage: The program shall provide structured opportunity to develop a comprehensive and discriminating understanding of the religious heritage.

A.3.1.1.1 Instruction shall be provided in Scripture, in the historical development and contemporary articulation of the doctrinal and theological tradition of the community of faith, and in the social and institutional history of that community.

A.3.1.1.2 Attention should be given both to the broader heritage of the Christian tradition as such and to the more specific character of particular Christian traditions and communities, to the ways the traditions transcend particular social and cultural settings, and to the ways they come to unique expression in them.

A.3.1.1.3 Instruction in these areas shall be conducted so as to indicate their interdependence with each other and with other areas of the curriculum, as well as their significance for the exercise of pastoral leadership.
Appendix E – ATS Master of Divinity Standards

A.3.1.2 Cultural context: The program shall provide opportunity to develop an understanding of the cultural realities and structures within which the church lives and carries out its mission.

A.3.1.2.1 The program shall provide for instruction in contemporary cultural and social issues and their significance for ministry. Such instruction should draw on the insights of the arts and humanities, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.

A.3.1.2.2 MDiv education shall address the global character of the church as well as the multicultural and cross-cultural nature of ministry in North American society and in other contemporary settings. Attention should also be given to the wide diversity of religious traditions present in the social context.

A.3.1.3 Personal and spiritual formation: The program shall provide opportunities through which the student may grow in personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and public witness. Ministerial preparation includes concern with the development of capacities—intellectual and affective, individual and corporate, ecclesial and public—that are requisite to a life of pastoral leadership.

A.3.1.3.1 The program shall provide for spiritual, academic, and vocational counseling, and careful reflection on the role of the minister as leader, guide, and servant of the faith community.

A.3.1.3.2 The program shall provide opportunities to assist students in developing commitment to Christian faith and life (e.g., expressions of justice, leadership development, the devotional life, evangelistic witness) in ways consistent with the overall goal and purpose of the school’s MDiv program.

A.3.1.4 Capacity for ministerial and public leadership: The program shall provide theological reflection on and education for the practice of ministry. These activities should cultivate the capacity for leadership in both ecclesial and public contexts.

A.3.1.4.1 The program shall provide for courses in the areas of ministry practice and for educational experiences within supervised ministry settings.

A.3.1.4.2 The program shall ensure a constructive relationship among courses dealing primarily with the practice of ministry and courses dealing primarily with other subjects.

A.3.1.4.3 The program shall provide opportunities for education through supervised experiences in ministry. These experiences should be of sufficient duration and intensity to provide opportunity to gain expertise in the tasks of ministerial leadership within both the congregation and the broader public context, and to reflect on interrelated theological, cultural, and experiential learning.
A.3.1.4.4 Qualified persons shall be selected as field supervisors and trained in supervisory methods and the educational expectations of the institution.

A.3.1.4.5 The institution shall have established procedures for selection, development, evaluation, and termination of supervised ministry settings.

A.3.2 Location

A.3.2.1 MDiv education has a complex goal: the personal, vocational, spiritual, and academic formation of the student. Because of the importance of a comprehensive community of learning, the MDiv cannot be viewed simply as an accumulation of courses or of individual independent work. In order to ensure an appropriate educational community, at least one year of full-time academic study or its equivalent shall be completed at the main campus of the school awarding the degree or at an extension site of the institution that has been approved for MDiv degree-granting status.

A.3.2.2 If requirements can be completed in extension centers or by means of distance learning, the institution must be able to demonstrate how the community of learning, education for skills particular to this degree, and formational elements of the program are made available to students.

A.3.3 Duration

A.3.3.0 In order to fulfill the broad educational and formational goals of the MDiv, the program requires a minimum of three academic years of full-time work or its equivalent.

A.4 Admission and resource requirements

A.4.1 Admission

A.4.1.1 The MDiv is a postbaccalaureate degree. Admission requirements shall include (1) a baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or holding membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada, or the educational equivalent; (2) evidence of the commitment and qualities desired for pastoral leadership; and (3) the academic ability to engage in graduate education.

A.4.1.2 As many as 10 percent of the students in the MDiv degree program may be admitted without possession of the baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent, if the institution can demonstrate by some objective means that these persons possess the knowledge, academic skill, and ability generally associated with persons who hold the baccalaureate degree. Admission of such applicants should be restricted to persons with life experience that has prepared them for theological study at the graduate level.

A.4.2 Distinctive resources needed
Appendix E – ATS Master of Divinity Standards

A.4.2.1 The MDiv degree, as the basic degree offered by board-accredited institutions, requires the resources identified in general institutional standards 1–10. In addition, MDiv students shall have access to community life that provides informal educational experiences, a sustaining religious fellowship, and adequate opportunity for reflection upon the meaning of faith in its relation to education for ministry. MDiv education is enhanced by faculty and community resources that support the goals of general education for ministerial leadership.

A.4.2.2 Faculty

A.4.2.2.1 Faculty shall relate the insights of their disciplines to the practice of ministry and shall be attentive to students’ spiritual development and professional growth.

A.4.2.2.2 Faculty resources should include some persons who are currently engaged in parish, congregational, or specialized ministerial leadership.

A.4.2.3 Community resources

A.4.2.3.1 The theological school shall maintain a vital relationship with the religious community or communities to which it is related and other support systems both to ensure that students have meaningful ministry contexts in which to work, and to facilitate the placement of graduates.

A.4.2.3.2 An open and mutually enhancing relationship with other theological schools, universities, professional schools, and social agencies should be maintained insofar as that relationship contributes to the accomplishment of the program’s goals.

A.5 Educational evaluation

A.5.1 The institution offering the MDiv shall be able to demonstrate the extent to which students have met the various goals of the degree program.

A.5.2 The institution shall also maintain an ongoing evaluation by which it determines the extent to which the degree program is meeting the needs of students and the institution’s overall goals for the program, including measures such as the percentage of students who complete the program and the percentage of graduates who find placement appropriate to their vocational intentions.

Appendix F – Interview Questions

F.1 Chaplains

Name (a pseudonym will be assigned by me):

Denomination and Endorser:

Number, locations, and dates of deployments:

Type of unit(s) to which assigned e.g. Cavalry Squadron; Infantry Battalion; Special Troops Bn; Brigade HQ; etc:

Did your unit of assignment (or the unit of a Chaplain you supervised) have Soldiers KIA/WIA:

When did you attend the Chaplain Officer Basic Course of Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course:

What training, if any, did you receive in reference to the performance of trauma ministry:

Do you feel the training you received was adequate (if so why; if not why not):

Did you attend any other training with a trauma component e.g. Emergency Medical Ministry Course, Combat Medical Ministry Course, CPE which a Trauma Center ministry (if so, how do you feel that training prepared you for traumatic event ministry):

Prior to deployment, what were your expectations of performing trauma ministry:

How did your expectations compare to the reality of performing trauma ministry:

Please give some specific examples of what you did, in the form of ministry, for those traumatically wounded and killed (please include your feeling as to the effectiveness of different things you did/ tried):

What do you think you failed to do/what do you wish you did now that you have the opportunity to look back at the events:

What do you feel your command expected of you in relation to trauma ministry:

How do you feel your command responded to the ministry you provided (please share specific examples if you have them):

What do you think your Soldiers expected of you in relation to trauma ministry:
Appendix F – Interview Questions

How do you feel your Soldiers responded to the ministry you provided (please share specific examples if you have them):

What was your personal care plan (if you had one) / what did you do for self-care in response to performing trauma ministry:

Looking back at it, what do you wish you did in the form of self-care:

What form of pastoral care did you receive from your supervisory chaplain:

What do you wish you received:

What pastoral care / emotional support did you get from other sources:

What do you wish you received:

What type of training in relation to trauma ministry do you believe should be provided (whether it is already in existence, or should be developed and implemented):

What type of trauma ministry advice would you give to a junior chaplain preparing for deployment:

Please feel free to add anything else in relation to your combat trauma ministry you feel would be beneficial to this field of research:

Thank you for your time and willingness to assist. If you desire a copy of the dissertation once complete and successfully defended, please record your complete contact information here:

FOR CHAPLAIN WHO SUPERVISED OTHER CHAPLAINS

What training did you encourage/provide for the chaplains you supervised to help them prepare for trauma ministry:

How did you assist those chaplains whom you supervised perform trauma ministry:

What sort of pastoral care did you provide to those chaplains who were performing trauma ministry/sustained KIAs and WIAs:
Appendix F – Interview Questions

Please feel free to add anything else in relation to your combat trauma ministry supervision you feel would be beneficial to this field of research:

Thank you again for your time and willingness to assist.

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steven.rindahl@amedd.army.mil
F.2 Officers

Rank and Name (a pseudonym will be assigned by me):

Number, locations, and dates of deployments:

Type of unit(s) to which assigned while deployed e.g. Cavalry Squadron; Infantry Battalion; Special Troops Bn; Brigade HQ; etc:

Your rank(s) and branch/duty position(s) while deployed:

Did your unit of assignment have Soldiers KIA/WIA:

Did you know your chaplain while deployed:

Please describe any training/briefing you may have received relating to a chaplain’s role and duties during times of combat:

Prior to deployment, what were your expectations of a chaplain performing trauma ministry:

How did your expectations compare to the reality of your chaplain performing trauma ministry:

Please give some specific examples of what the chaplain did for those traumatically wounded and killed (please include your feeling as to the effectiveness of different things the chaplain did/tryed):

What do you think your chaplain failed to do/what do you wish your chaplain did now that you have the opportunity to look back at the events:

Do you feel your chaplain’s actions helped you/your Soldiers through the traumatic event which caused injury (to yourself or others) or death (of one of your Soldiers):

What form of pastoral care (if any) did you receive from your chaplain:

What do you wish you received:

What pastoral care / emotional support did you get from other sources:

What do you wish you received:
Appendix F – Interview Questions

What type of training, in relation to trauma ministry, do you believe should be provided to chaplains:

What type of trauma ministry advice would you give to a junior chaplain preparing for deployment:

Please feel free to add anything else in relation to your combat trauma experience you feel would be beneficial to this field of research:

Thank you for your time and willingness to assist. If you desire a copy of the dissertation once complete and successfully defended, please record your complete contact information here:

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Appendix F – Interview Questions

F.3 Soldiers

Rank and Name (a pseudonym will be assigned by me):

Number, locations, and dates of deployments:

Type of unit(s) to which assigned e.g. Cavalry Squadron; Infantry Battalion; Special Troops Bn; Brigade HQ; etc:

Your rank and MOS while deployed:

Did your unit of assignment have Soldiers KIA/WIA:

Did you know your chaplain while deployed:

Prior to deployment, what where your expectations of a chaplain performing trauma ministry:

How did your expectations compare to the reality of your chaplain performing trauma ministry:

Please give some specific examples of what the chaplain did for those traumatically wounded and killed (please include your feeling as to the effectiveness of different things the chaplain did/tryed):

What do you think your chaplain failed to do/what do you wish your chaplain did now that you have the opportunity to look back at the events:

Do you feel your chaplain’s actions helped you through the traumatic event which caused injury (to yourself or others) or death (of one of your fellow Soldiers):

What form of pastoral care (if any) did you receive from your chaplain:

What do you wish you received:

What pastoral care / emotional support did you get from other sources:

What do you wish you received:

What type of training in relation to trauma ministry do you believe should be provided to chaplains:
What type of trauma ministry advice would you give to a junior chaplain preparing for deployment:

Please feel free to add anything else in relation to your combat trauma experience you feel would be beneficial to this field of research:

Thank you for your time and willingness to assist. If you desire a copy of the dissertation once complete and successfully defended, please record your complete contact information here:

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